Social Imagery in Middle Low German

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Social Imagery in Middle Low German

Didactical Literature and Metaphorical Representation (1470–1517)

By

Cordelia Heß

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Stockholm, January 2013

ABBREVIATIONS

ALB D	Anhaltinische Landesbibliothek Dessau
BC	Borchling, Conrad, and Bruno Claussen, eds. *Niederdeutsche Bibliographie: Gesamtverzeichnis der niederdeutschen Drucke bis zum Jahre 1800*. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1931
BSB	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München
CIC	Corpus iuris canonici
DRW	Deutsches Rechtswörterbuch: Wörterbuch der älteren deutschen Rechtssprache
GB D	Georgsbibliothek Dessau
GNN	Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg
GW	Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke, <http://gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>
HAB	Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel
ISTC	Incunabula Short Title Catalogue
KB	Det Kongelige Bibliotek København
LexMA	Lexikon des Mittelalters
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Nd. Jb.	Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung / Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch
PL	Patrologia Latina
StB PK	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz
S. th.	Summa theologica
SUB Gö	Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen
SUB HH	Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg
UB K	Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln
UB R	Universitätsbibliothek Rostock
UB U	Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek
UFB	Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfurt/Gotha
UL C	Cambridge University Library
ULB D	Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt
ULB S	Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt
VD16	Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts, <http://www.bsb-muenchen.de/1681.0.html>
VerfLex	Verfasserlexikon
Verl.	Verlag
WLB	Württembergische Landesbibliothek

INTRODUCTION

Medieval Social Imageries

Ad narragoniam—the *Ship of Fools* (1494) has a clear destination, and its crew consists of members of all social orders and groups, men and women, rich and poor. If people fail to turn around and convert to a better, more Christian life, they will end up in the land of fools instead of in the Promised Land, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise. Every fool wants to be the captain, even though none are competent, and all lack basic Christian virtues such as humility and obedience. Sebastian Brant's satirical representation of the order of the world is probably one of the most obvious examples of a metaphor for society developed in the Late Middle Ages and re-used in propaganda during the Reformation, the ship itself being a social metaphor with biblical roots. The ship is a perfect image for a hierarchical society with an eschatological basis: there must be a coxswain, a captain, a helmsman, and a variety of subordinates; the voyage has a beginning and an end, the ship is exposed to dangers such as storms and cliffs, and the material quality of both the humans and the ship itself plays an important role in determining the outcome of the voyage. Many scholars have noted the important role Sebastian Brant plays in German humanism and the relationship of his *mundus inversus* imagery to texts by Erasmus of Rotterdam and the *Schildbürgerbuch*. This suggests that the ship of fools has a fixed place in the collective social imagery and the history of ideas in the early sixteenth century. But the prominence of the ship of fools in contemporary research and late medieval and early modern learned discourse is entirely misleading regarding the use and importance of the ship metaphor in the Late Middle Ages. First, even though the image is striking, is supported by the interaction of text and images and adds to the coherence of the entire text, Sebastian Brant does not fully exploit it:[1] he does not assign a captain, pays very little attention to the internal hierarchy of the fools and does not consider the reason for the

[1] Scholars are still arguing about the need to extract a coherent meaning from the medieval text considering the ship metaphor, with the positions shifting between criticism of the lack of exploitation of the metaphor and an emphasis on the surplus of meaning the metaphor provides at a higher level. See Knape, Joachim. *Poetik und Rhetorik in Deutschland 1300–1700*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006, 111–112.

voyage or for its departure. Second, and more crucially, Sebastian Brant's text is a lone example of the use of the ship as a social image, and it is a very late arrival in the context of late medieval literature, having first been printed in 1494. Within the broad corpus of late medieval edifying literature, there are no other examples of the ship as a social metaphor. What literary scholars appreciate as an example of an artist's originality and creativity is essentially useless for a historical investigation of social imagery, of its frequency and connection with late medieval social realities—of its *Sitz im Leben*.

Sebastian Brant's book obviously qualifies as a late medieval bestseller, with several unauthorized contemporary translations and a series of Geiler of Kaisersberg's sermons based on it. It was written, adapted and diffused in the lively intellectual circles of the early humanists found in Strasbourg and Basel which were also the centers of book production in the south of the empire. The situation was entirely different in the north: only one version of the Middle Low German translation of the *Ship of Fools* was prepared and printed in Lübeck in 1497, and a single edition of a different version was printed once in Rostock in 1519. Whatever can be said about the connection between Sebastian Brant's text and the social history or the history of ideas of his time, it requires further consideration in the case of the north, since the degree to which texts were diffused varied with the language they were printed in and the cultural setting in which they were diffused. Why was the ship as a metaphor less popular in the coastal towns of the Baltic Sea region, even though their economies and socio-political contexts relied on the values, networks and linguistic specifics of a maritime setting much more than was the case in the south? This leads to the question of the cultural specificity of the Middle Low German region, where the production of printed books followed different rules and favored different types of texts than was the case in the southern German lands. It also leads to a basic epistemological question: Is it in general possible to derive information about medieval societies from the textual records of their social imageries? Social imageries are narratives of legitimation of institutions or of a political and social status quo consisting of different interacting, overlapping or contradictory images. They are crucial to the establishment and habitualization of social divisions and of the totality of a society's imaginary.[2]

[2] For the concept of habitualization according to Bourdieu, see Scharloth, Joachim. "Die Semantik der Kulturen. Diskurssemantische Grundfiguren als Kategorien einer

Scholars of medieval history have answered the question about the value of social imageries for historical understanding differently. In his ground-breaking study *Les trois ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme* (1978),[3] Georges Duby outlined a concept of the imaginary of medieval society that substantially differed from earlier concepts: the three orders as a parenetical outline for the elites, as a reminder of their duties instead of as a description of a status quo, and as an ideological support for the elites and thereby part of the ideological superstructure necessary for the creation of meaning within the status quo.

The relation between the imaginary and imagery as related to the structuralist concept of linguistic signs consisting of a signifier and a signified provides a crucial starting point for this study: in any cultural and historical context, there are always several different images for the social order, which together form a somewhat coherent imagery. This imagery in turn signifies "society," not as a faithful representation, but as a narrative of power relations and meaning. The concept of a society's imaginary as an ideological superstructure in its turn requires a definition of ideology as a set of beliefs and social practices linked "not to a particular class but to the fundamental feature of social division."[4]

This concept of a complex interaction of social imageries in narratives of legitimation of power has already been suggested in Duby's study dealing with only one image, but no scholar has until now undertaken a comparative study of the different social images, and of the totality of the imagery in a specific historical context or in specific discourses. Instead, scholars dealing with both the High Middle Ages and the Reformation have acted upon assumptions about predominant imagery of the Late Middle Ages

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linguistischen Kulturanalyse." In *Brisante Semantik: Neuere Konzepte und Forschungsergebnisse einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Linguistik*. Ed. by Dietrich Busse et al., 133–147. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005, ibid. 144. Another attempt to make Bourdieu fruitful for historical research is Speth, Rudolf, and Gerhard Göhler. "Symbolische Macht: Zur institutionentheoretischen Bedeutung von Pierre Bourdieu." In *Institutionen und Ereignis: Über historische Praktiken und Vorstellungen gesellschaftlichen Ordnens*. Ed. by Reinhard Blänkner and Bernhard Jussen, 17–48. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.

[3] Duby, Georges. *Les trois ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996 [1978].

[4] This definition of the nature of ideology in relation to and demarcation from Marxist conceptions is given in Thompson, John B. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990 [1984], 25. Thompson suggests an approach towards ideology as a system of social practices which serve to maintain power relations, with language as a crucial point. Ideology in this concept is not primarily to be found in the programmatic texts of writers consciously producing ideology, but it is interwoven with every day language. Ibid., 35–36.

based on their own material. They basically seem to agree that feudal society was mainly legitimized using the image of the *oratores, bellatores* and *laboratores*, but that the urban spheres lacked a consistent outline for their imagery as a result of both the increasing differentiation of lifestyles and of textual discourses, which made it difficult to depict "society" with one single image.[5] But this was equally true for the feudal societies of the High Middle Ages, which were less differentiated than the late medieval urban centers, but still consisted of so many different regions, language zones and legal entities that their representation using a single image also seems unlikely—the famous three orders also belonged to a certain discourse, to a certain region and language. Imageries need to be connected to the cultural setting they are used in in order to be comprehensible and functional, but the relation of imageries, the imaginary and some kind of extra-linguistic reality is nothing more than a facile equation.

The ship of fools as a satirical metaphor for society was known in the Middle Low German region, so it must have been speaking to the sailing and traveling merchants of the Hanseatic League—such a conclusion would be overly simplistic, given both the origin of the metaphor in a town that lacked a coast and its greater popularity in the southern regions, often in areas with no connection to maritime business. Nonetheless, social imageries are extremely relevant to the study of late medieval societies. They make it possible to extract specific aspects of late medieval ideologies from the various discourses, they can illuminate differences between a clerical and a lay ideology and they can help to clarify and legitimize hierarchies and power relations in general in a specific cultural and historical context.

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[5] Oexle, Otto G. "Perceiving Social Reality in the Early and High Middle Ages: A Contribution to a History of Social Knowledge." In *Ordering medieval society: Perspectives on intellectual and practical modes of shaping social relations*. Ed. by Bernhard Jussen and Pamela Selwyn, 92–143. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, ibid. 120; Brandt, Reinhard. *D' Artagnan und die Urteilstafel: Über ein Ordnungsprinzip der europäischen Kulturgeschichte; 1, 2, 3/4*. München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 1998; Iwańczak, Wojciech. "Mittelalterliche Dilemmata: Die Stadt und die Lehre von den drei gesellschaftlichen Ständen." *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 74 (1992); Schorn-Schütte, Luise. "Die Drei-Stände-Lehre im reformatorischen Umbruch." In *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch: Wissenschaftliches Symposion des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996*. Ed. by Bernd Moeller, 435–461. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verl.-Haus, 1998; Feistner, Edith. "Zur Semantik des Individuums in der Beichtliteratur des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 115 (1996): 16. Feistner is one of the few authors to restrict the dominance of their topic to a certain genre, in her case, catechetical literature.

Metaphor and Meaning: Towards A Denaturalization of Social Imagery

With "society" as the target domain, the object of a study of metaphors for society in late medieval didactical literature both expands and contracts. It contracts, since there are almost no metaphors in the narrow linguistic meaning of the term, and almost no figurative expressions or narratives for the abstract concept of society. This is surprising, since religious literature generally can be considered one of the most important sites for the mediation of specific ideas about the social order,[6] and the theological tradition provided a pool of possible metaphors that could have been used as tools for this mediation.

On the other hand, the field for the investigation of social imageries expands, since there are numerous different concepts of society, its mechanisms of exclusion and its internal hierarchies expressed in different images—the nine choirs of angels, the moral and the functional tripartition, various oppositions and *revues des états* for both positive and negative orders—and they can all be read as figurative speech or as tropes (images) of society. According to modern theories of rhetoric, a deviant use of language is common to all tropes, distinct from what one would learn from a standard dictionary. The use of this definition for medieval texts is problematic for two reasons: first, it differs from medieval definitions and taxonomies about rhetorical tropes; second, the detection of deviant language in medieval texts is generally difficult and is often a matter of intuition, since many expressions have lost their metaphorical sense and have become so normalized that it is not possible to recognize them as figurative speech, but rather to read them as literal expressions—they are faded metaphors. The opposite is also true: many rhetorical figures that today would be read as metaphors were taken as literal in medieval texts and theory because they expressed deeply ingrained religious beliefs.[7] An example is the image of God as a judge, which, according to Meinolf Schumacher, was not a metaphor in medieval texts but simply

[6] Oexle, Otto G. "Stände und Gruppen. Über das Europäische in der europäischen Geschichte." In *Das europäische Mittelalter im Spannungsbogen des Vergleichs: Zwanzig internationale Beiträge zu Praxis, Problemen und Perspektiven der historischen Komparatistik*. Ed. by Michael Borgolte and Ralf Lusiardi, 39–48. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 2009, ibid., 40.

[7] Haderer, Michael. *Wege zum Schatten-Gebräch: Eine historisch-chronologische Untersuchung zur Anwendbarkeit literatur- und sprachwissenschaftlicher Metapherntheorien*. Marburg: Tectum-Verl., 2007, 68.

a description of one of God's functions.[8] Whether well-known and ubiquitous metaphors for society, such as the body metaphor, had achieved the same level of normalization for the medieval reader is difficult to determine. The definition of different images for society as tropes suggested here is meant to help reveal this process of normalization, blurring the lines between literal and figurative speech and between deviant and conformist speech. The three orders, *oratores, bellatores* and *laboratores*, present themselves as faithful descriptions of society, but in fact they are a metonymy: "a deviant usage in which each word is literally possible in an expanded context in a sense approximating to that of its given use."[9] A representative selection is treated as the totality. *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, René Magritte wrote under his picture of a pipe. *Ceci n'est pas la société*, I would like to write under the picture of the three orders—where are the women, the Jews, the merchants, the children? The analysis of medieval social imagery as consisting of different rhetorical tropes based on contemporary linguistic theories, and not on a medieval theory of rhetoric, offers the potential for decoding highly normalized images.

In the case of the didactical literature of the Late Middle Ages, the absence or loss of a single dominant metaphor is more characteristic than is a continuing tradition for any single one. Furthermore, a general loss of metaphors for society is visible. Where society is conceptualized and described, figurative speech using principles of similarity is rarely used: more often rhetorical figures that operate on the principle of contiguity are employed, taking a part of society or a subtotal as representative of the entity. But the lack of one single dominant metaphor for society does not mean that social imageries are entirely absent—quite the contrary. Cognitive sciences have pointed to the importance of rhetorical figures in human perceptions of the world and for the creation of meaning, and the socio-political implications of different rhetorical figures for society. An inventory of rhetorical figures for society in the Late Middle Ages thus becomes a "moral science of possibilities,"[10] decoding the possible ways of imagining society and its alternatives. If, as feminist rhetorical studies have suggested, changing metaphors means changing

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[8] Schumacher, Meinolf. *Sündenschmutz und Herzensreinheit: Studien zur Metaphorik der Sünde in lateinischer und deutscher Literatur des Mittelalters.* München: Fink, 1996, 60.

[9] Silk, Michael. "Metaphor and Metonymy: Aristotle, Jakobson, Ricoeur, and Others." In *Metaphor, allegory, and the classical tradition: Ancient thought and modern revisions*. Ed. by George R. Boys-Stones, 115–147. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003, ibid., 132.

[10] Strecker, Ivo. "On Anthropology as a Moral Science of Possibilities." *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 4 (2005).

perspectives,[11] then collecting and analyzing metaphors will lay the groundwork for this change.

It is probably not a pure coincidence that the first historical studies of the medieval concepts of *ordo* were produced by scholars working at German universities during the National Socialist period—the idea of an extra-personal order that defines both the internal hierarchies, including the order of the genders, and the outer boundaries of a clearly defined and closed society is familiar to the *völkische* concept of nation, state and race and can easily be projected onto medieval sources. It is easy to focus on the aspects of order, hierarchy and subjugation in the medieval imageries of society and to see a coherent system of fixed estates and orders as fundamental for medieval society. This view of medieval society as socially inflexible, following a heavenly order clearly defining the individual's place, can certainly be derived from the sources of the theological learned discourse, but as the one single valid matrix for medieval society, it is merely an anachronistic projection and is just as ideological in its preconceptions as the medieval texts themselves.[12] Challenging the homogeneous character of concepts of medieval ordering can be achieved by applying modern methods and theories to the sources and by widening the sample. If the sample is extended beyond the clean, logically and rhetorically sophisticated texts that come from scholastic or nominalist debates to include the more chaotic, disordered and fragmentary patterns of anonymous compilations in the vernacular, then some traditional boundaries appear less stable and fixed.

Target Domain(s): Who is "society"?

Cognitive and structuralist theories of rhetorical forms—metaphors, metonymies and oppositions are the most relevant ones in this context—provide tools for the denaturalization of figurative language and help to mark the difference between signifier and signified, or, in medieval terms, between *res* and *signa*. There are many different definitions of the term "metaphor", deriving from linguistic, cognitive or psychoanalytic sciences.

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[11] Foss, Karen A., Sonja K. Foss, and Cindy L. Griffin. *Feminist rhetorical theories*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1999, 115.

[12] An exemplary exegesis of the ideological basis of medievalist Otto Brunner and his use of legal terminology can be found in Algazi, Gadi. "Otto Brunner—'Konkrete Ordnung' und Sprache der Zeit." In *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft: 1918–1945*. Ed. by Peter Schöttler, 166–203. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

Common to all is the basic idea of a source domain and a target domain for the metaphor as well as a semantic break between them, which requires decoding and is the source of the new meaning. For a study of historical semantics, cognitive definitions based on Lakoff/Johnson's studies,[13] James Paxson's theory of personifications,[14] Roman Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy[15] and Dan Sperber's theory of the symbolic[16] provide the most fruitful approach.

The basic operation carried out by those tropes relevant to metaphors for society is that "a whole domain of ontologically alien, separate, and privileged quantities can be translated into familiar, present, and time-bound ones."[17] While this quote refers to personifications, it can be applied to metaphors for society as well, compensating for the strict division between figurative and literal understanding since the basic operation is a *translation* of an abstract concept (society) into familiar quantities (persons, representatives and images). "Metaphor" as a generic term is meant to indicate the different figurative and representative functions of a rhetorical figure and its potential literal or figurative interpretations. Metaphorology allows for differentiation on both sides of the sign and for all phenomena occurring in Middle Low German religious literature regarding the conceptualization of society to be embraced, as will be shown. The common denominator of all of these rhetorical figures is that they resemble the sign as understood by structuralists.[18]

$$\text{(rhetorical figure)} = \frac{\text{signified}}{\text{signifier}}$$

Examples of two of the popular metaphors of society would look like this:

$$\text{opposition: clerics/laypeople} = \frac{\text{(society)}}{\text{male Christians}}$$

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[13] Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 [1980].

[14] Paxson, James J. *The poetics of personification.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.

[15] Jakobson, Roman. "Der Doppelcharakter der Sprache und die Polarität zwischen Metaphorik und Metonymik (1956)." In *Theorie der Metapher*. Ed. by Anselm Haverkamp, 163–174. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1983.

[16] Sperber, Dan. *Le symbolisme en général*. Paris: Hermann, 1985.

[17] Paxson, *Poetics of personification*, 166.

[18] Paxson has made this observation regarding the relationship between personifications and the abstract entities they personify, ibid., 39–40.

$$\text{metaphor: nine choirs of angels} = \frac{\text{(society)}}{\text{the righteous among the Christians}}$$

Social imageries contain information about their source domain; that is, the social order, its hierarchies and the principles of distinction that are considered relevant. They also contain information about the target domain, that is to say the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that define the abstract and, for Middle Low German, the anachronistic term "society." This information is often not to be found in the narrow image itself, but in the frame, the context of the image,[19] an area too often neglected. Studies of metaphors often take a single focus term as their point of departure and follow this term through a sample of texts, basically looking at the term itself and a limited amount of the framework surrounding it. This method is problematic since it does not provide any information about the frequency with which the metaphor is used or of the timeframe and the dominance of the metaphor within a given text. This is closely connected to another postulate; the generation of a predefined corpus as the frame of reference for a study of imagery.[20] This in turn reminds us of an oft-stated but rarely fulfilled need to engage in conceptual history under these premises—defining a corpus in order to be able to contrast the results of the evidence related to the focus term with other types of evidence, its frequency and its co-occurrences, instead of picking examples wherever they can be found in order to prove a preformulated thesis.

In this study of social imagery, I take the metaphor's target domain as a point of departure and use a defined corpus: printed edifying and lay didactical books in Middle Low German from the years 1470–1517. This has the methodological advantage of providing not only clear evidence

[19] The terminology of source domain, target domain, focus and frame is basically developed in Black's interactive theory of metaphors and seems to be standard for different schools of metaphor theory. Cf. the articles in Gibbs, Raymond W., ed. *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008.

[20] In an attempt to systematize the methodology for studying metaphors, Petra Gehring criticized this approach and listed several factors that should be taken into consideration, among them the question of whether a study of metaphors takes the focus word, the entire metaphor or the target domain as its key plane of analysis. She also recalled the necessity of defining the level of abstractness aspired to; a single focus term, an entire metaphor with as many examples as possible or a metaphor as an example for a whole field of metaphoric imagery. Gehring, Petra. "Erkenntnis durch Metaphern? Methodologische Bemerkungen zur Metaphernforschung." In *Metaphern in Wissenskulturen*. Ed. by Matthias Junge, 203–220. Wiesbaden: VS Verl. für Sozialwiss., 2010.

of the use of certain images, but also of their frequency, their interaction and their place within different literary genres and discourses. That metaphors with the same focus term can differ from each other in content and meaning is also taken into account, since the target domain is the fixed point while the different metaphorizations are collected, juxtaposed and analyzed.

"Society" is in itself a highly symbolic term, and it is an anachronism. In Middle Low German, there is no direct translation or related word that could be used as a target term. The texts conceptualize "all Christians," "all estates," "all human beings," sometimes "the town" or "the country," but never do so explicitly. As a result, the unit that is described and metaphorized shifts on the basis of different contexts. Society itself can be seen as a metaphor, and in Blumenberg's terminology even as an absolute metaphor—a term that cannot be expressed other than metaphorically—that implies only the theoretical possibility for the re-translation of the image.[21]

With the focus on the source domain—the different images for society—many questions regarding the target domain remain unresolved, even unasked, in many studies: are women an integral part of the imagined society, and what about members of other religions or Christian sinners or merchants? Contact with other religions, differences between the urban and the rural spheres of life and the loss of the significance of the emperor as an inclusive factor for an overall Christian-European identity, are all factors that may have contributed to the fact that "society" is not a clearly defined unit in late medieval didactical literature, but a shifting concept. For "Christian society" as a target domain, the tradition of Bible exegesis and the imagery of the Church—the Mystical Body of Christ, all Christians, the Gospel—as a "spiritual antitype" to the Old Testament is crucial.[22] A spiritual antitype consists of a concrete biblical or historical person or event as *praefiguratio* of an abstract or spiritual entity, the opposition based in their dialectic relationship to each other. With Christian society as the target term of this allegorical or typological concept, the dialectical subsumption of the concrete old into the spiritual new is

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[21] Blumenberg, Hans. *Paradigms for a metaphorology*. Transl. by Robert I. Savage. Signale. Ithaca, N.Y., s.l: Cornell University Library, 2010, 14ff.

[22] Ohly, Friedrich. "Synagoge und Ecclesia. Typologisches in mittelalterlicher Dichtung." In *Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung*. Ed. by Friedrich Ohly, 312–337. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1983.

always an implicit part of the metaphor.[23] However, even if this implication is basic and crucial to the medieval understanding of society, secular and political concepts can also be intended and metaphorized, and the immanence of an eschatological dimension to the metaphor must be ascertained by analyzing the context.

A rhetorical form cannot be decoded by exclusively focusing on the image itself while neglecting the rest of the text and textual framework. The Middle Low German book, *De Witte lilien der kuscheyt*, produced in Braunschweig in 1507,[24] is an example of this, with the virtue of chastity being expounded in the metaphor of a lily. Generally, all rhetorical tropes can be called into question in two directions, source terms and target terms: "chastity" (target term) is a "lily" (source term). A lily is a white flower with petals. Each petal is a virtue connected to chastity and deriving from it. The lily is a large and impressive flower, and chastity is one of the major virtues. The principle of similarity between the source term and the target term is not particularly pronounced in this metaphor: the connection is probably a relic of a much older metaphorical connection, so its meaning has become independent. As for the target area, what is it that chastity stands for or implies—celibacy, female or male virgin life, sexual relations without lust, or sexual relations exclusively within the context of marriage? The image of the lily does not answer these questions, but the context itself does. In the case of the text *Witte lilien*, chastity is synonymous with virgin life, as the title of the text states. The petals of the lily represent the fear of being touched, temperance in eating and drinking, modesty in clothing and so on, all virtues that can be claimed by both virgins who plan to marry later in life and (male and female) virgins in clerical orders. Thus, the metaphor itself does not explain the implication of

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[23] Michel, Paul. "Übergangsformen zwischen Typologie und anderen Gestalten des Textbezugs." In *Bildhafte Rede in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit: Probleme ihrer Legitimation und ihrer Funktion*. Ed. by Wolfgang Harms et al., 43–72. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992, coins the term "spiritual antitype" and develops a taxonomy of allegories and typologies, primarily in the context of the writings of the Church Fathers. He defines typology as a "way of thinking," not as a concrete and precise term for a specific trope. Ibid., 68–69.

[24] The title *De witte lilien der kuscheyt* is listed as BC 429. The modern library catalogues give the first lines of p. 3—the first preserved page—as title: Vppe dat yuwe werdicheit eine kleyne hulpe darynne hebben moge/ de kyndere tuchtlike[n] vn[de] geistlike[n] lerende. Braunschweig: Hans Dorn, [ca. 1507]. Hereafter quoted as *Witte lilien*.—All bibliographic information about the incunabula and early imprints is contained in the appendix listing the titles in Middle Low German and in modern standard German according to the British Library's *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC). In the annotations, both versions of the titles are given in short form.

the target domain, but the framework of the metaphor does, and further aspects can be discerned from the source domain. But since the relation between source domain and target domain is necessarily arbitrary, these contributions are the result of context, not of the image itself: a lily might serve just as well as a metaphor for innocence, for death or for celibacy. To analyze only the metaphor itself and to neglect the context leads to spurious assumptions about the significance of the target domain—in this case, it might have seemed obvious that chastity is synonymous with monastic life. In the same sense, all tropes for society must be questioned; signifier, signified and context. The central questions are: who and what is society, and how is it conceptualized?

Master Narratives and their Potential for Translation

Ordo is probably the medieval term that is closest to the modern concept of society—the division of people into different orders and the hierarchical relationship between these orders, something that has attracted the interest of German scholars in particular.[25] "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca distribuens dispositio," St. Augustine wrote in *De civitate Dei*.[26] In his conception—which became classical for the Late Middle Ages—*ordo* and *iustitia* are akin to each other since both regulate the subordination of some human beings to other human beings and ultimately of human beings to God.[27] Augustine did not explain how these humans would recognize and assume their places in the righteous order—it seems that *ordo* was often so self-evident as to not require an explanation in medieval sources. However, the potentially different meanings of the Latin term and its vernacular German translations *stand, stat*, and *stade* have been investigated and established as an entire semantic field denoting all different levels of ordering[28] from the order of the

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[25] On medieval societies' distrust of equality see Bloh, Ute von. "Unheilvolle Erzählungen: Zwillinge in Geschichten des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts." In *Text und Kontext: Fallstudien und theoretische Begründungen einer kulturwissenschaftlich angeleiteten Mediävistik*. Ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, 3–20. München: Oldenbourg, 2007, ibid., 20.

[26] Aurelius Augustinus. *De civitate dei. Libri XI–XXII*. Ed. by A. Kalb. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955, liber XIX, 3, z. 11f.

[27] Hand, Volkmar. *Augustin und das klassisch-römische Selbstverständnis: Eine Untersuchung über die Begriffe gloria, virtus, iustitia und res publica in De civitate dei.* Hamburg: Buske, 1970, 50.

[28] Manz, Luise. *Der Ordo-Gedanke: Ein Beitrag zur Frage des mittelalterlichen Ständegedankens*. Stuttgart; Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1937.

cosmos through the social order, both secular and the different levels of priestly ordination, to religious orders, including every individual's position in this order.[29] *Ordo* also serves to distinguish members of the clerical order from laypeople and from each other, in the sense of the different levels of priestly ordination. *Ordo* is something created by God representing God's will and His goal for His creation.[30]

Considering the far-reaching and comprehensive meaning of the Latin term *ordo*, medievalists have in the past few decades been surprisingly uninterested in researching the meaning and consequences of the *ordo* principle.[31] The concept of *ordo* is acknowledged as essential for medieval thought and ideology. It is often mentioned en passant with a nod in the direction of one or another famous quotation about *ordo*, the aforementioned St. Augustine quote, for example. But very few scholars have taken on the task of defining more clearly what *ordo* is, where and how often the term was used and under what circumstances—pursuing, for example, the general doubt expressed by Bernhard Jussen about the centrality of the term, and thereby the importance of the concept.[32] It is widely accepted that there was not a single concept of society that was used in all discourses and in all regions. Nonetheless, many scholars proceed with an implicit or explicit idea about a master narrative for medieval self-perception: most popular among these is that of the three orders, with either a functional or a moral division of people, along with the body metaphor. These images and their later vocation as master narratives derive from texts that were originally written for a very specific audience and subsequently perceived as equally fitting for other situations, thereby becoming influential outside of their specific historical context. Functional tripartition was "invented" by two bishops in eleventh-century France in order to support the Pax Dei movement and to discourage the local nobles from their constant feuding.

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[29] Kaminsky, Howard. "Estate, Nobility, and the Exhibition of Estate in the Later Middle Ages." *Speculum* 68, no. 3 (1993).

[30] A rudimental comparison of the consequences of the ordering system for medieval Christian societies and the ordering systems of Muslim societies in Black, Anthony. "European and Middle Eastern Views of Hierarchy and Order in the Middle Ages. A Comparison." In *Orders and hierarchies in late medieval and Renaissance Europe*. Ed. by Jeffrey Denton, 26–32. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

[31] Krings, Hermann. *Ordo: Philosophisch-historische Grundlegung einer abendländischen Idee.* Halle/Saale: Niemeyer, 1941.

[32] Jussen, Bernhard. " 'Ordo' zwischen Ideengeschichte und Lexikometrie: Vorarbeiten an einem Hilfsmittel mediävistischer Begriffsgeschichte." In *Ordnungskonfigurationen im hohen Mittelalter*. Ed. by Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter, 227–256. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2006.

The moral tripartite division was "invented" by St. Augustine and other Church Fathers based on the exegesis of the Parable of the Sower in the Synoptic Gospels meant to support the Christian idea of virginity and, in the long run, the privileges of the clergy arising from this idea. The body metaphor, "invented" by John of Salisbury, was an adaptation of Plutarch and was meant to describe the duties of the individual in relation to the welfare of society at large. Historical research has not determined how influential any of these three images was, especially not as regards the extension of ideologies originally geared to the clergy and nobility into discourses that sustained other social groups. More concretely: were those images that are considered master narratives for medieval society transposed from political theory into other discourses at all? For example, were they used in other religious writings, thereby finding their way into lay didactical literature? Considering that most of these images supported a clerical and noble ideology, it is questionable whether they were adopted for a lay urban audience—which leads to a broader question about the potential for translation of images between different discourses. Translation here refers to a migration from one level to another; from clerical to lay audiences, from a feudal society to urban societies, from Latin to the vernacular and eventually also from the High Middle Ages to the Late Middle Ages.

Two basic elements underlie the structure of this study: first, the presumptions of various previous studies about the evidence of social imagery and its supposed dominance in the Late Middle Ages; second, the rhetorical forms actually found in the corpus. These two guiding principles are closely connected: the first necessitates not only the identification of functional and moral tripartition, body metaphors and *revues des états*, but also of the terminology used to elaborate them. The terminology, for its part, often indicates the adoption and modification of traditional social imagery of which only isolated features and specific aspects were redefined and used. For example, while there is no evidence of virgins, widows and married people appearing as a triad, there are numerous texts dealing with virgins or married people. These texts indicate whether the Latin terms and concepts employed for moral tripartition were still in use and, if so, how they were translated into Middle Low German.

Lay Didactics in the Middle Low German Region: The Reformation Matrix

For the study of translation processes, at least one of the areas of comparison must be relatively stable, as a reasonably coherent and specific

cultural area is a necessary point of reference for the translation of learned discourses. Considering the problems illustrated with the Ship of Fools, a basic requirement for a historical investigation of social imagery as part of a study of medieval ideology is the shift from a few prominent and creative examples to a broad corpus of sources. Middle Low German print production in the years 1470–1517 constitutes a suitable sample, because it provides similar modes and frameworks for the production of the texts and for the way they are perceived in a cultural sphere that is relatively homogenous and is shaped by a lingua franca and by the comparable socio-political circumstances in the different urban centers. In contrast to the Latin incunabula and early imprints, the Middle Low German books were written, produced and read in a clearly demarcated region, stretching from the west of the Low Countries to the eastern border of Prussia and Lithuania, and from Magdeburg and Cologne in the south to Stockholm and Sigtuna in the north. The language, promoted and diffused along the trading routes and in the settlements of the Hanseatic League and its institutions, has been the subject of negative remarks even on the part of the few scholars who focus on it. "Keeping the naïvety of the thought" and "especially suited for inferior comical texts" were earlier descriptions.[33] Nowadays the aspects of bilingualism, high status variants of the language and other pragmatic factors have been the subject of research, with a focus on colonialism, while a neglect of the specificities of source production in this area remains operative, especially in historical research. Besides a few examples of outstanding literary production such as the aforementioned Middle Low German adoption of the Ship of Fools or the rhymed epics *Reynke de Vos* or *Dodes Dantz*, the corpus is primarily made up of highly repetitive religious literature of a devotional, parenetical and edifying character, including a variety of Bible translations and paraphrases, Psalters and plenaries. These types of texts have often been neglected by historical—and literary—research due to their lack of originality. On the other hand, it is these books that provide evidence of the first mass consumption of literature. Although still read by a social and economic elite, this literature was nonetheless much more widely read and more broadly accessible than anything available in previous centuries. Additionally, lay didactical literature in a broad sense includes the translation of learned discourse into lay discourse in the areas of theology, philosophy and political theory, and therefore it is likely that not

[33] Lübben, August. "Zur Charakteristik der mittelniederdeutschen Literatur." *Nd. Jb.* 1 (1875): 8–9.

only were purely religious topics translated, but also a specific concept of society and its hierarchies. As Middle Low German is a vernacular that was mainly developed and used for pragmatic purposes—diplomacy and trade—it is likely that the translation of certain terms and concepts with a decidedly religious meaning in Latin posed a problem in the context of a basically "profane" language.

"Periodization is the bane and blessing of historical writing,"[34] Robert James Bast stated in the introduction of his study on late medieval and early modern catechisms. The question as to whether theology, the history of ideas or society in the fifteenth century were of a "still medieval," a "pre-Reformation" or even of an "already pre-modern" nature constitutes a virtually insurmountable matrix for every study on the topic, particularly because a majority of the historians dealing with the fifteenth century have an expressed interest in Reformation studies. Regarding social imagery, the paradigm of continuity from the Middle Ages to the Reformation period has produced a number of studies which take the Lutheran concept of orders as a point of origin and trace them back to medieval figures of thought, namely, functional and moral tripartition and the exegesis of the Fourth Commandment.[35] Despite the obvious parallels between medieval and early Protestant concepts of ordering society, this angle produces assumptions about the dominance of "pre-Reformation" social imagery in the Late Middle Ages which are indefensible, and other aspects which were less or non influential for the Lutheran concept of orders are neglected.

Given that the Reformation was comprehensively and quickly adopted in most parts of the Middle Low German language area, identifying the epochal breakpoint and the factors that foreshadowed it in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries gains weightier significance in any interpretation of late medieval events in the region. Still, in the present study I will

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[34] Bast, Robert J. *Honor your fathers: Catechisms and the emergence of a patriarchal ideology in Germany, 1400–1600.* Leiden: Brill, 1997, IX.

[35] An early study on the presumed continuities from medieval to Reformation imagery is Maurer, Wilhelm. *Luthers Lehre von den drei Hierarchien und ihr mittelalterlicher Hintergrund.* München: Verl. der Bayerischen Akad. der Wissenschaften, 1970. Maurer sees the origins of the Lutheran dogma of the three orders in the late medieval development of the exegesis of the Fourth Commandment. Ibid., 14ff. Schorn-Schütte, "Drei-Stände-Lehre," also traces the Lutheran orders to their medieval origins and sees functional tripartition as their major influential model. Also Behrendt assigns the functional tripartition a predominant place as a precursor of Lutheran and generally early Protestant thought. Behrendt, Walter. *Lehr-, Wehr- und Nährstand. Haustafelliteratur und Dreiständelehre im 16. Jahrhundert.* Diss., Freie Univ., FB Philosophie und Geisteswiss, 2009, 24ff.

pursue a basic principle of historicism that Walter Benjamin rejected: forgetting about everything we know about the later course of historical events;[36] that is, forgetting about the Reformation when dealing with the late fifteenth century, in an attempt to free the historiographical narrative about the period from the template of Protestantism versus Catholicism and Middle Ages versus Reformation. This seems justified on several grounds: the restriction of the corpus to the year 1517 has more than simply a pronounced symbolic value, it also reflects an attempt to use sources that can be compared in terms of production, language and distribution. The production of lay didactical literature in Middle Low German incunabula and early imprints remains relatively stable until that year both in its absolute and relative terms, but in 1517 everything changes suddenly; the number of texts printed, the percentage that constitutes lay didactical literature, the number of texts produced by lay authors, and the number of texts with an identifiable author. It is pretty obvious that until 1517 the printers in Lübeck and Magdeburg had a preference for texts produced by anonymous authors and not based on a Latin or German model text—a perception that will be reinforced by a quantitative analysis of the (surviving) print production in that area—while many of the bestsellers of late medieval edifying literature written by identifiable clerics were produced in Cologne, where there was also a substantial difference in the number of books produced in the vernacular.

The late medieval—or pre-Reformation—period in the Middle Low German region suffers under a double burden: the narrative of the dawning Reformation and the narrative of the Holy Roman Empire as a political and cultural entity. Both have in the past contributed to a neglect of the linguistic, cultural and historical specificities of the region and of its affiliation with the Baltic Sea region rather than continental Germania. The Middle Low German region is characterized by a lack of interaction with the southern centers and by the absence of strong centers of courtly culture, but also by a tight political and economic network between towns in different urban confederations within the Hanseatic League. Many factors utterly relevant for social and intellectual developments in the south either did not arrive or arrived very late in the coastal towns in the north, from Jewish settlements to the organization of imperial knights

[36] Benjamin, Walter. "Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte." In *Abhandlungen. Gesammelte Schriften Bd. I.2*. 5th ed. Ed. by Rolf Tiedemann et al. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006, VII, 696.

to humanism. In the case of the Middle Low German region, rejecting Walter Benjamin's assertion that historical events should be interpreted in the direct light of subsequent events requires one to strictly adhere to another of his recommendations—to "brush history against its grain." This in fact is not only possible, but is essential for the investigation of social imagery in lay didactical literature since, despite their generally conservative and hierarchical character,[37] these texts contain a surprising potential for a redefinition and inversion, almost revolution of the social order that derives from their intermingling of different knowledge systems and different discourses.

Ideology and Social Imagery: Different Discourses

In historical scholarship in the German language, the use of the term "ideology" for pre-modern historical phases has been heavily criticized, especially since scholars from East Germany were not as timid about using the term.[38] To speak and write of medieval ideology was stigmatized as being inevitably ideological in itself with the implicit definition of ideology as "rendered false by political presumptions." But other definitions of ideology that are less connected to (German) Cold War lines of conflict are actually important and helpful for defining the intersection of power relations and the political interests of certain groups that manifest themselves in linguistic forms. Of course, one has to assume that neither research nor research interests, neither modern language nor historical sources could under any circumstances be entirely free of ideology.

As John B. Thompson has pointed out, several philosophers have conceived of ideology as something that is constructed not as a result of but for the advantage of certain groups.[39] While generally supporting the theory that ideologies can be constructed by different social groups, he criticizes a neutral concept of ideology and instead develops a critical and

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[37] For a discussion of didactical literature in a broad sense see Lähnemann, Henrike, and Sandra Linden. "Was ist lehrhaftes Sprechen? Einleitung." In *Dichtung und Didaxe: Lehrhaftes Sprechen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Ed. by Henrike Lähnemann et al., 1–10. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2009.

[38] Cf. the contributions in the anthology Matschke, Klaus-Peter and Ernst Werner, eds. *Ideologie und Gesellschaft im hohen und späten Mittelalter*. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1988.

[39] This is in contrast to the Marxist concept, which defines ideology as part of the *Überbau* and thereby always an instrument of the ruling classes. A proletarian or socialist ideology is not contained in this concept. Thompson, *Studies*, 46–47.

process-based concept. Ideology is, in this sense, a form of social practice crucial for the sustenance of power relations and social division.[40]

Thompson's concept of ideology emphasizes the importance of symbolic forms as constitutive of social reality: classes (in the Marxist sense of the word) are not only determined by economic factors, but also by the symbolic forms that represent these classes and thereby constitute social relations similar in magnitude to the economic factors. An inherent problem of the application of this concept of ideology to pre-modern societies is that it inevitably deals with undifferentiated, clichéd definitions of social groups. "Clerical ideology" as a discursive setting supporting the clergy suggests the clergy to be a homogenous group without severe differences in economic and socio-political conditions for secular clergy, mendicants and prelates. The same applies to "the laity", "the nobility" and, most of all, "the urban upper classes." This cannot be entirely avoided, but differentiation, according to the vast amount of scholarly research about social differentiation in late medieval societies, can help to make the differences in the clichés visible.

Understanding the ordering of society as a part of ideology in the sense of a set of beliefs and social practices explains why it is very rarely an explicit topic in late medieval morally instructive literature for laypeople; the prevalent ideology structures the hierarchies expressed in the texts, but not the texts themselves.[41] While penitential books written entirely for the use of priests often contain explicit lists of orders and professions, with guidelines on how to interrogate various people, the books for laypeople only subtly imply such an ordering by directly addressing groups either as "honorable" or in a deprecating manner, by dealing extensively with certain groups and ignoring others or by describing some as lost and some as still to be saved.[42] The principles by which people are divided

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[40] "To study ideology is to study the way in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination." Ibid., 56.

[41] A similar concept of ideology is used by Hubler, who assumes an ideological preoccupation on the part of each author, who would then choose a communicative structure on that basis. Hubler, Alfred J. *Ständetexte des Mittelalters: Analysen zur Intention und kognitiven Struktur*. Tübingen: Francke, 1993, 194.

[42] Harmening, Dieter. "Katechismusliteratur. Grundlagen religiöser Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter." In *Wissensorganisierende und wissensvermittelnde Literatur im Mittelalter: Perspektiven ihrer Erforschung*. Ed. by Norbert R. Wolf, 91–102. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1987, ibid., 93–94. Harmening distinguishes between texts for an elementary catechism, which were often written for the confessor's use, and penitential literature, which could be used by both the confessor and the penitent. The possibility of use by both clerics and laypeople seems to be characteristic of late medieval catechetical literature.

and ranked hierarchically are difficult to see if one looks only at explicitly formulated and explicated overall schemes for social ordering—the differences between people are much more often expressed in smaller, less spectacular forms, which still contain the entire range of ideological presumptions about them. "I will spare no one, let him be a Pope or a layman, a peasant or a courtier. Come here, young, old, rich, poor, large and small,"[43] says Death in the opening section of the Lübeck *Dodes Dantz*, in an obvious attempt to involve all human beings in his dance. These lines do not present a developed interpretive scheme or metaphor for society, and yet they contain an entire collection of linguistic forms describing society in its totality and presenting possible ways of distinguishing people from each other: belonging to the clerical order, a profession or being a manual laborer, belonging to the courtly milieu, an age group, a category of wealth or a social position in general. Additionally, the linguistic form of oppositions or binomials points to a certain concept of society as consisting of dichotomic antitypes that are dialectically intertwined, an image that takes up the aspect of mutual responsibilities and expresses it much more clearly than functional tripartition ever could.

The delineation of a social order based on factors such as wealth, birth, gender or profession requires ideological legitimization in the form of imagery that creates knowledge and meaning related to these differences. Medieval societies, however, did not rely on a single knowledge system, as becomes evident from examining the use of different discourses and their related knowledge systems in lay didactical literature.[44] The knowledge people receive from different discourses also plays a determinate role in contemporary western societies, which does not lead to the destabilization or the examination of these systems. In the Late Middle Ages, even though it was still the clergy that produced most written sources, book production in the vernacular and the ever-widening audience led to a variety of discourses.[45] Scientific knowledge deriving from classical texts

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[43] "Nemande wil ick sparen dar an, he sy pape effte leye, bure effte houeman, komet her iunck, olt, ryke, arm, grot vnde kleyne." Des Dodes Dantz. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1496. BC 272, GW M47263, fol. 3r.—For bibliographic information about the other editions of *Dodes Dantz*, see appendix.

[44] Sperber and Morton, for example, worked with the distinction between encyclopaedic, semantic and symbolic knowledge in describing the integration of contradicting facts into a coherent system of world knowledge. Sperber, Dan, and Alice L. Morton. *Rethinking symbolism.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press u. a., 1975, 93ff.

[45] Hugo Kuhn speaks of a "literary explosion" in the fifteenth century, because of these developments. Kuhn, Hugo. "Versuch über das fünfzehnte Jahrhundert in der deutschen

and philosophers, Christian religious thought intended for the clergy or the laity, fragments of knowledge about other religions and societies and non-authoritative knowledge that could probably be traced back to pagan times were all to some degree available to people, conveyed through different channels and presented simultaneously in texts of a didactical character in the vernacular. There were catechisms predominantly dealing with Christian dogma and intended as an explanation of basic accepted truths. There were Books of Mirror that took up catechetical knowledge and combined it with advice about vice and virtue in everyday life, along with more general knowledge about God's creation. These texts, along with others, constituted a giant translation project, the basis for which had been established by sermons and other forms of lay didactical teaching, which, with the invention of book printing, achieved an entirely new potential for diffusion. The translation process involved the diffusion of knowledge in discursive fields where this knowledge had not previously been readily available.[46] While the texts printed during the first fifty years following the invention of the new technology were most often of a traditional character[47] and took up genres and texts widely known already in manuscript form, the simple fact that the potential audience had become larger led to changes in the nature of the texts—a treatise on monastic life has a different meaning for a lay reader than it does for a monk. The framework of purely religious knowledge such as the canon of the mortal and venial sins, beliefs about heaven, hell and purgatory and advice about a perfect confession, was relatively stable and coherent and this is probably one of the reasons why so many scholars have chosen not to deal with the vast number of explanations of the Decalogue, prayer books and instructive collections: the majority of these texts are boilerplates of an identical and stereotypical nature that fail to invite anything other than quantitative studies or studies of text tradition. However, when

Literatur." In *Literatur in der Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters*. Ed. by Hans U. Gumbrecht, 19–38. Heidelberg: Winter, 1980.

[46] Grubmüller, Klaus. "Geistliche Übersetzungsliteratur im 15. Jahrhundert. Überlegungen zu ihrem literaturgeschichtlichen Ort." In *Kirche und Gesellschaft im Heiligen Römischen Reich des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. by Hartmut Boockmann, 59–74. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994.

[47] I use the term "traditional" to demarcate texts and discourses from the Latin theological tradition from discourses in texts produced in the late fifteenth century, which were not part of a longer tradition, were probably not translated and were, thereby, open to different ideologemes. The question of whether these new discourses were less conservative or otherwise differed from the ones with a longer tradition must be answered on a case-by-case basis.

dealing with other areas of knowledge, lay didactical literature mirrors the divergent and heterogeneous traditions and knowledge systems it is compiled from. The most popular form of Middle Low German text production, the anonymous compilation of catechetical texts from unknown sources, also gives the content and the discourses a compilatory character. This is especially the case with regard to those questions not directly connected to basic religious matters and education: concepts of society developed in various political settings for various historical periods and circumstances. The linguistic forms that were used to conceptualize these political-religious questions were just as likely to derive from an obscure religious textual tradition as from texts that more closely reflected the daily use of Middle Low German as a written language, the normative and legal sources produced in the Hanseatic towns.[48]

Didactical literature is a broad genre that incorporates a variety of discourses.[49] The textual traditions of the mirrors of princes provide insight into the nature of authority and the virtues required of rulers, while the general parenetical impact of the catechetical texts is to delineate specific social structures, which are taken up in a religious context in order to educate people in general about virtue and about their place in the social order. The parenetical aim of lay didactical literature moves it thematically beyond purely religious knowledge, drawing discursive fragments from political theory as well as from medicine, astrology and historiography—the attempt to morally uplift human beings is closely tied to the effort to understand human nature, and the question of the ideal social order is, based on the comprehensive concept of *ordo*, one aspect of this human nature.

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[48] Cf. the classification of social groups according to normative and legal sources in chapter II.

[49] This corresponds to some degree with Bernd Hamm's concept of "normative Zentrierung" in the fifteenth century. See, for example, Hamm, Berndt. "Das Gewicht von Religion, Glaube, Frömmigkeit und Theologie innerhalb der Verdichtungsvorgänge des ausgehenden Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit." In *Krisenbewußtsein und Krisenbewältigung in der frühen Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans-Christoph Rublack*. Ed. by Monika Hagenmaier and Hans-Christoph Rublack, 163–196. Frankfurt am Main u. a.: Lang, 1992; Hamm, Berndt. "Von der spätmittelalterlichen reformatio zur Reformation: Der Prozeß normativer Zentrierung von Religion und Gesellschaft in Deutschland." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 84 (1993).

Edification and Demarcation: Anti-Judaism and Anticlericalism

The usefulness of the term *Erbauungsliteratur* as a generic term for a specific kind of text has been discussed by various literary studies scholars. Despite its admitted vagueness and its lack of distinctive accuracy in terms of the intended public and the text form, it is still in use. The basic factor that qualifies a text as *Erbauungsliteratur* is its attempt to provide the reader with spiritual guidelines: these can run the gamut from devotional texts and prayer books through catechetical explanations to parenetical fables.[50]

If the instructive aim is the key characteristic of these texts, we have to ask what it is that they are trying to teach. Traditionally, fundamental Christian values are mentioned in connection with the basic catechetical texts used: the Decalogue, the Creed, lists of sins and virtues.[51] The focus on the "positive" aspects of Christian guidelines omits important aspects that, although they don't necessarily serve to provide a more accurate model for distinguishing *Erbauungsliteratur*, help to more clearly describe the basic objectives of lay didactical texts as well as their role as a medium for political theory. Different images of society express different views of the socio-political order, but they all share a common ideological framework with distinct ideologemes[52] dominant in all didactical texts—anti-Judaism, anticlericalism and, in a somewhat different way and to a somewhat different degree, antifeminism. Although the presence of all three ideologemes is obvious in all lay didactical texts, even if to different extents, it is difficult to simultaneously discuss the evidence for each. They are all directed at groups that have been assigned a special legal place in medieval societies: they all represent important factors of

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[50] "Es gibt nicht 'das Erbauungsbuch' des 15. Jahrhunderts [...] Die Basis bilden dabei geistliche Anleitungen, ganz allgemeine Lehren und Unterweisungen christlichen Verhaltens sowie Anleitungen für bestimmte Bereiche (Beichten, Sterben o.ä.). Der Dekalog, alleine oder mit Auslegungen, Gebete und Predigten können die Belehrungen ergänzen [...] Exempel und Legenden, selten auch Lieder, mögen die Zusammenstellung als eher unterhaltende Elemente ergänzen." Roth, Gunhild. *Sündenspiegel im 15. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zum pseudo-augustinischen "Speculum peccatoris" in deutscher Überlieferung*. Bern: Lang, 1991, 148.

[51] For a discussion of the anachronistic nature of the term "catechism" when applied to the fifteenth century, see Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 2–6.

[52] In the definition of ideology I use here, drawn from Thompson, ideologies are differentiated by the social groups they support. Ideologemes, such as anti-Judaism, are ideological, religious or political fragments or lines of thought appearing in different discourses and ideologies.

demarcation. However, while anticlericalism is directed against the visible economic and social privileges of a certain group, the two other targeted groups were already disadvantaged in the legal system and, therefore, the elimination of privileges is not what is being demanded, but rather its opposite—the consolidation of existing inequalities. While anticlericalism and antifeminism aim at a redefinition of the inner boundaries of (male) Christian society, anti-Semitism targets its outer boundaries.

Anti-Judaism and anti-Jewish ideologemes are integral aspects of the texts traditionally counted as *Erbauungsliteratur*, often connected to an emphasis on the Passion of Christ and a specific interpretation of the biblical narrative in which it is no longer the Romans who killed Christ, but "the Jews," with the necessity of his crucifixion for Christian eschatology and soteriology being neglected in favor of a simplified opposition between Christ as the absolute good and "the Jews" as his opponents.[53] Contemplations of the Passion of Christ are filled with fierce verbal attacks against Christ's presumed murderers, and explanations of the liturgy commemorate the same events with the same assigned roles. Guidelines for Christian daily life contain explicit demarcations against Jewish customs as well as admonitions against usury, often connecting this specific sin with "the Jews." Here the line between Christian anti-Judaism and racist anti-Semitism is crossed, since "the Jews" are no longer defined by their religion, but by an ascribed moral status. Many texts explicitly deal with the relation between Christians and Jews, discussing the question of extra taxes for Jews and the need to isolate them in ghettos—entirely in keeping with the political status quo. Other texts deal with the question of conversion and baptism of Jews, and these strongly deny the possibility of "the Jews" setting aside their "Jewishness" in favor of the Christian way of life, especially their presumed lust for secular goods. All of these examples run through the traditional *Erbauungsbuch* with its timeless prayers, meditations and catechisms. They share their didactical aim with contemporary texts: legends about blood libel, bleeding hosts and the subsequent murder and expulsion of the Jews. These teach a certain kind of Christian value: keep away from the Jews, suspect them of any imaginable bestiality and work for their expulsion from your territories. The central and integral part that anti-Semitic resentment plays in lay didactical literature

[53] On the anti-Jewish reduction of the roles of the biblical narrative, especially in Passion plays, see Martin, John D. *Representations of Jews in late medieval and early modern German literature*. Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2006.

indicates an important aspect of the concept of *ordo*: it does not only order Christian society, but also clearly defines its outer boundaries and reinforces them using different legitimization strategies, always attributing moral values to them. Religious and moral arguments against the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Jews are omnipresent, at times appearing alongside demarcations against Christian sinners, heretics and occasionally women. Sometimes they are based on a purely religious anti-Judaism, and on other occasions Jewishness is equated with a certain moral quality, indicating that anti-Semitism was an open reality and must be considered an integral part of both late medieval lay and clerical ideologies.

Unlike the division between Christians and Jews, which manifests few ambiguities but numerous gradations of hatred in the texts investigated, the relationship between those who administer the sacrament and those who receive it is ill-defined and is handled differently on the basis of whether or not the text belongs to a more or less traditional discourse. In spite of the difficulties presented by the use of the term "anticlericalism" with regard to medieval texts, this aspect still has to be discussed in the context of the late medieval lay didactical literature—with a careful distinction between anticlericalism, criticism of the clergy and the general redefinition of the demarcation between clergy and laity—which is the most relevant aspect in lay didactical literature and "anticlerical" mainly in the sense that it ultimately questions the clergy's exceptionalism. Most scholars of medieval history seem to agree on a definition of anticlericalism as a collective attitude or form of behavior that is directed against clerical privileges and power.[54] Distinctions regarding this basic bias take into consideration the time frame this definition might cover—from antiquity to modern times—bearing in mind the forms and locations of the anticlerical action. José Sánchez, for example, speaks of practical, ideological, intellectual, economic and other forms of anticlericalism and explores the cause and effect link, i.e. the "righteousness" of anticlerical resentment as a direct response to "wrong" behavior on the part of clerics. Working with these distinctions, Daron Burrows' pragmatic definition of anticlericalism proves the most useful for the purpose of a literary analysis: anticlericalism

[54] Sánchez, José M. *Anticlericalism: A brief history*. Notre Dame Ind., London: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1972, 7–8; Beine, Birgit. *Der Wolf in der Kutte: Geistliche in den Mären des deutschen Mittelalters*. Bielefeld: Verl. für Regionalgeschichte, 1999, 38: Burrows, Daron. *The stereotype of the priest in the old French fabliaux: Anticlerical satire and lay identity*. Oxford: Lang, 2005, 19–20; and the contributions in Dykema, Peter A. and Heiko A. Oberman, eds. *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe*. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1993.

for Burrows "simply denotes negative treatment of the clergy."[55] For the lay didactical literature of the fifteenth century, this pragmatic definition can serve as a basis, but must be further differentiated on the basis of the evidence found in the text.[56] Unlike the corpus of sources Burrows deals with—Old French *fabliaux*—lay didactical literature has diverse authors, literary genres and intended audiences, and thus it must be determined on a case-by-case basis where the anticlericalism comes from and who it is intended for. In this regard, Sánchez' distinctions are useful: in those cases where a text that can be proven to be the work of a clerical author includes criticism of the clergy, it might be clerical anticlericalism. Both lay and clerical anticlericalism can be discerned in those texts that have been compiled and translated by anonymous authors or even the printers themselves.

In addition to the above distinctions, the bases for the anticlerical utterances must be taken into account: criticism of the clergy's wealth, criticism of the sexual and moral conduct of individual clerics or other well-proven lines of conflict. Criticism of the clerical monopoly of theological education and doubts about the spiritual merits deriving from this monopolized knowledge are the most common forms of anticlericalism in lay didactical literature. The historical context for this phenomenon is the mystical tradition, the monastic reform movements of the fifteenth century and, above all, the *Devotio moderna* movement. One of their foundational texts, *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis, constantly stresses the uselessness of learned knowledge and intellectualism in comparison to true faith and contrition. Even more, the dangers of knowledge are elucidated: "Quanto plus et melius scis, tanto gravius judicaberis inde nisi sancte vixeris," Thomas says.[57] This argument and its derivatives—the connection between religious knowledge and hypocrisy, the danger of intellectual hubris—base their criticism of clerical privileges on a specific

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[55] Burrows, *Stereotype*, 20.

[56] Anticlericalism and its usefulness for the description of medieval phenomena have been widely debated. Most scholars see a differentiation of anticlericalism and criticism of the clergy as crucial: the first indicating a fundamental questioning of the privileges of the entire clergy, the second various forms of criticism of single members of the clergy, but otherwise a general acceptance of the order's privileges. It is often impossible to decide whether a single sentence of criticism is only directed against a single cleric and whether a general questioning of the Church provides the background for this criticism. In the cases where this distinction can be maintained doubtlessly, it will be used; otherwise "anticlericalism" will be used according to Burrow's definition.

[57] Thomas à Kempis. *Imitatione Christi libri quattuor*. Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1925, liber primus, cap. 2,3.

anti-intellectualism that rejects the utility of religious knowledge altogether. The same argument from the other side maintains that religious knowledge can be diffused directly to laypeople, thereby allowing them to attend to their salvation individually. The Donatist view that the sacrament was only valid if the priest who administered it was in the state of grace constitutes another ideological argument—here the ambiguity within many texts becomes apparent, with, for example, the strictly anti-intellectual Thomas à Kempis clearly denying this view in favor of a general respect for the priest's dignity simply because he has the power to administer the sacrament.[58] One fragment of anti-clericalism in a text does not equal a general examination of clerical privileges, and there is a wide spectrum of potential positions regarding the relationship between the clergy and the laity.

The well-established lines of conflict between the clergy and the laity throughout the Middle Ages are also an example of how prevalent topics find their way into varying genres and discourses and are dealt with according to the ideological basis of the text's discourse. The clergy is usually one of the groups targeted in entertaining texts: the different versions of texts such as *Salomon und Markolf* or *Reynke de Vos* always included the clergy as a target for criticism from the point of view of another social group, often the peasantry. The fierce satirical attacks against members of the clerical order in this tradition were often combined with a general anti-authoritarian impetus,[59] which actually resembles the general criticism directed at all social orders and groups in lay didactical literature to some extent. The attacks against the clergy are not as fierce in Middle Low German didactical texts as they are in satirical epics and novels in the vernacular, but they appear frequently even in this genre, which is supposed to promote the laity's respect for the clergy. However, while the general need for a secular regime and for obedience to it is constantly stressed in lay didactical literature, the boundary between clergy and laity is more often neglected than debated. This is the result of the constant focus of the texts on "all Christians," which gradually deprived the clerical order of both its moral and spiritual superiority and of its importance for salvation in general. Whether this focus derives from clerical or lay authors cannot be determined, nor is it important to the outcome: in one case, laypeople

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[58] Ibid., liber quartus, cap. 5.

[59] Curschmann, Michael. "Marcolfus deutsch: Mit einem Facsimile des Prosa-Drucks von M. Ayrer (1487)." In *Kleinere Erzählformen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. by Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger, 151–239. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993, ibid., 155.

claim their own right to strive for salvation with a declining emphasis on the need for spiritual guidelines; in the other case, clerics work towards their own redundancy by teaching the laity to take responsibility for their own salvation.

The Social Order and the Order of Virtues

There is a basic contradiction in medieval and early modern Christian ideology between the principle of equality,[60] as proposed in the Gospel, and the principle of inequality, as proposed in all the other theological and philosophical writings, the terms *ordo* and *hierarchia* being significant in the latter. The basic and inalterable idea at the core of all definitions of *ordo* is the stability of the boundaries established by the *ordo* and the willing and necessary subordination of all humans to the rules of their respective *ordo*—harmony in inequality. On a normative level, this concept proposed a strict vertical stratification of clearly distinguished social groups with mutually distinct rights and duties, of which the privileges of the nobility and the clergy were integral parts—at least this is the common narrative about the Middle Ages.

Equality became one of the terms of engagement during the Peasants' War and the Reformation, but the Protestant idea of the "priesthood of all believers" did not lead to a generally more equal understanding of society in terms of social and juridical equality:[61] the main target of the (non-radical) reformers was the clerical order, while the basic concept of subordination went untouched. The Lutheran dogma of the three orders was developed in connection with the late medieval tradition of criticizing religious authorities, especially in the cities,[62] and led in consequence to a new definition of the relation between community, church and ruler.

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[60] For a medieval conceptual history of equality see Sigmund, Paul E. "Hierarchy, Equality, and Consent in Medieval Christian Thought." In *Equality*. Ed. by James R. Pennock, 134–153. New York: Atherton Press, 1967; and for the significance of a specific notion of equality in the German towns see Frenz, Barbara. *Gleichheitsdenken in deutschen Städten des 12. bis 15. Jahrhunderts.* Köln, Frankfurt am Main: Böhlau, 2000.

[61] For a much more optimistic view of the implications of Protestantism for the development of an ideology of equality, see Benjamin, Francis S. "Review of Wilhelm Schwer, Stand und Ständeordnung im Weltbild des Mittelalters." *The Journal of Economic History* 14, no. 1 (1954).

[62] For an example of a comparative analysis of conflicting groups and topics during late medieval revolts in Northern German Hanseatic towns see Hergemöller, Bernd-Ulrich. *"Pfaffenkriege" im spätmittelalterlichen Hanseraum: Quellen und Studien zu Braunschweig, Osnabrück, Lüneburg und Rostock.* Köln: Böhlau, 1988.

But the protagonists of the new ideology were largely those who had formulated the rules for the old order—the priests.[63] They presented the new order in the words and models of the old order, depicting the old *ordo*-scheme as wrong and the new order—which was also tripartite and hierarchic—as biblically based.[64]

Robert James Bast has shown the impact that fifteenth-century catechesis had on the development of a paternalistic model for society, determining this relationship to be a major phenomenon of *longue durée*, beginning in the thirteenth century and continuing into the early modern period. He describes the subsequent "monastization" of daily life as a consequence of the application of monastic ideals to laypeople, mirrored in the numerous late medieval texts that use the term *regula* for lay didactical admonitions, as well as in the increasing emphasis on the *paterfamilias*, which culminated in the Ten Commandments becoming public policy in the early modern state. Bast thereby differentiates the selective reading of the Fourth Commandment used to develop the Lutheran dogma of the three orders, highlighting instead how the application of monastic norms to laypeople led to a comprehensive expansion of *Sozialdisziplinierung* in the late fifteenth century.[65] This establishes a valid basis for the further investigation of late medieval social ordering in lay didactical literature, not as something opposed to the Lutheran orders, but as part of a single protracted dialectical process that involves both internalization and external and governmental control. The state and the secular government, however, do not play a significant conceptual role in late medieval didactical literature.

Within this context, the parallel existence of a social order and an order of virtues is crucial. The social order includes and legitimizes privileges for the clergy and the nobility, for kings and judges, and for prelates and monks, whether or not they are good people who fulfil the duties specific to their place in the social order. Traditional social boundaries have to exist and have to be respected. Even though there is room for criticism, the overall framework of the social order is not touched upon. The order of virtues, on the other hand, inspired by the social revolutionary aspects of the New Testament and by the comprehensive project of lay spirituality and didactics in general, suggests something different, circling around

[63] Schorn-Schütte, "Drei-Stände-Lehre," 457.
[64] Ibid., 459.
[65] Bast, *Honor your fathers*, passim.

the central figure of status inversion: Blessed are the Poor, the First will be the Last.[66] It draws on ideological and textual fragments that reinforce the idea of basic human equality in the face of death and judgment; for example, the *Ars moriendi, Danse macabre*, or the meditations on the Passion of Christ, which serve as models for joy in suffering, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the parenetical attempt to teach the right Christian way of life to everyone. Based on the Decalogue, confession with true contrition and a basic prayer routine were required of all Christians regardless of their place in the social order. A redefinition of the status of the clergy is a logical result of this, as are the occasional anticlerical fragments criticizing the loose conduct of individual priests and the involvement of prelates in matters of secular power. These two models of ordering belong to two different discourses, which can be detected as the ideological models shaping various aspects of the texts: their attempts to create authority for the text, their connection to Latin theological or vernacular legal texts and, above all, their support for different social groups and power relations.

Something is stable, something is shifting. The outer boundaries of Christian society are a fixed matter, but for its inner hierarchies there are at least two competing models expressed in a variety of linguistic forms and patterns with varying discursive attachments and implications. These are the subjects of this study.

[66] The rhetorics and logics of status inversion in the New Testament are analyzed in Hays, Christopher M. *Luke's wealth ethics: A study in their coherence and character.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, 104ff.

CHAPTER ONE

A SPACE OF ITS OWN: URBAN LITERATURE FROM COLOGNE TO LÜBECK

I.1 *Language and Cultural Space*

Despite the numerous studies of medieval libraries, individual book collections and the diffusion of certain popular texts, a synthesis of the book and reading culture of the Middle Low German region is still largely out of reach. In order to establish the cultural and historical framework for the analysis of the rhetorical tropes of society, this chapter tries to delimit the question from different angles: first, Middle Low German as a religious language, and thereby a language for devotional books; second, the production of books in the vernacular compared to the printing of Latin books; and third, the origin of the devotional books in Middle Low German as translations or as Middle Low German originals. These three steps will establish the cultural and textual area shaped by the language itself, its history and that of the institutions that promoted it. This is a necessary step, not only because an inventory of social imagery needs a clearly defined cultural and linguistic area in order to produce reliable results, but also because the differences between the two large German language regions have been greatly neglected. Regarding the history of lay didactical literature in particular, compared to the south of the German lands with its undoubtedly much richer tradition and wider variety of texts, the Middle Low German region is largely a terra incognita.

Middle Low German was a language that developed from the need for pragmatic literacy and was most differentiated in the areas where the institutions that used it were most active. The so-called "classical" Middle Low German was undoubtedly coined by the Hanseatic League. On the other hand, the language was most widely spread and used in a period when that phenomenon itself was already in decline. In the early period and during the climax of the political and economic power of the Hanseatic League in the early fourteenth century, Latin was the lingua franca, while Middle Low German reached its peak of use and differentiation in

the fifteenth century.[1] Despite the dominance of the Hanseatic League and its institutions fundamentally responsible for the development, use and spread of Middle Low German in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the language's history shows that it was primarily developed and used in pragmatic areas of urban life and administration. Most likely, Middle Low German (in different variations and dialects) was the spoken language in the offices of the Hanseatic merchants, even at a point when Latin remained the written language of communication. In those towns where the Hanseatic League had trading stations (Bergen, Novgorod, London) and in those where many merchants lived (Stockholm, Copenhagen, Lödöse), it is likely that the majority of the town's population was bilingual,[2] which does not indicate anything about Latin literacy.

Middle Low German started to be used as a written language in the thirteenth century, with a few examples of courtly literature: a *Lucidarius*, written at the court of Henry the Lion, a translation of Ovid and a Tristan novel. Braunschweig and Magdeburg, with their courts, were the centers of writing. Overall, however, Middle High German was the language of the northern courts, due to the general impact and dominance of the southern centers on courtly culture. The contrast can be illustrated with the example of the mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg who wrote (or dictated) her seven books about "The flowing light of divinity" in Middle Low German as a conscious counterpart to the Middle High German language of courtly culture and literature. The original vernacular version, however, is no longer extant.[3]

No sources survived the 150-year period following these early examples. In the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century, Middle Low German (re)emerged, this time as a language for pragmatic literacy, initially outside the Hanseatic League. While there is very little evidence of rhymed texts, Middle Low German increasingly developed as a useful and

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[1] Peters, Robert. "Die Rolle der Hanse und Lübecks." In *Sprachgeschichte: Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und ihrer Erforschung*. Ed. by Werner Besch, Gerold Ungeheuer and Armin Burkhardt, 1496–1505. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000.

[2] Mähl, Stefan. "Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsche Briefe und Urkunden des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts." In *Sprache in der Stadt*. Ed. by Claudine Moulin-Fankhänel, 133–145. Heidelberg: Winter, 2010, ibid., 140.

[3] See Poor, Sara S. "Mechthild von Magdeburg. Gender and the unlearned tongue." In *The vulgar tongue: Medieval and postmedieval vernacularity*. Ed. by Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, 57–80. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2003.

suitable written language in the areas of juridical and historiographical prose, with courtly lyrics still written in Middle High German.[4]

Eike von Repgow, town scribe, laid the cornerstone for Middle Low German as a language of professional prose. His codification of the regional law, the *Sachsenspiegel*, failed to sell in Latin, forcing him to produce a Middle Low German translation for the less learned public. Shortly thereafter, the first municipal laws (Braunschweig 1227, Stade 1279, Lübeck ca. 1267, Visby ca. 1270) were codified in Middle Low German. From 1250 onward, even *libri civitatis* (town books) were written in Middle Low German, which did not yet exist in a homogenous form but consisted of several different regional written languages: Westphalian, Eastphalian, Northern Low German and others. Even though the names for the written languages generally resemble the names for the modern regional dialects, the Middle Low German written languages were not identical to these dialects.[5]

In the area of diplomacy, the change from Latin to the vernacular came later, around 1350, starting in Hildesheim, the south of the Middle Low German area, and moving northwards. The language change was driven from above: the chancelleries in the northern German lands shifted early on to the vernacular because it helped them and the lower nobility—which was usually poorly educated and thus spoke Latin poorly—with administration and their mutual communication. The towns would initially only write diploma in the vernacular when they wanted to show a certain respect for the sovereign: the town scribes were very well educated in Latin, so the correspondence between towns was not conducted in the vernacular before the 1360s and the language change within the Hanseatic League. After 1370, the protocols of the delegate meeting (*Hanserezesse*) suddenly began to be written in Middle Low German. Since by that time the merchants usually no longer traveled, but worked out of offices located in different towns, trading was generally organized in written form, and there is plenty of evidence going back to the thirteenth century that indicates that Latin was the language of account books, administration and official communication and remained so until the end of the fourteenth century.[6] Thus the connection between Middle Low German and trade

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[4] Peters, Robert. "Mittelniederdeutsche Sprache." In *Niederdeutsch: Sprache und Literatur; eine Einführung*. Ed. by Jan Goossens, 66–115. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1973, ibid., 72–73.

[5] Meier, Jürgen, and Dieter Möhn. "Die Textsorten des Mittelniederdeutschen." In Besch et al., eds. *Sprachgeschichte*, 1470–1477; Peters, Robert. "Die Diagliederung des Mittelniederdeutschen." In *ibid*., 1478–1490.

[6] Peters, "Die Rolle der Hanse," 1496–1505.

was much weaker than was the case for Middle Low German and administration or law. How the bilingualism in many of the towns around the Baltic Sea influenced the local variants of Middle Low German has been poorly researched.[7]

In summary, it is important to keep in mind that the early phase of Middle Low German as a written language was characterized by many different dialects and variants,[8] and that the pragmatic situations in which the language was developed were in the areas of juridical prose, diploma and, to a somewhat lesser extent, historiographic prose.[9] The institutions that carried forward the language use and development were urban administration and jurisdiction. Some decades later, Middle Low German was employed as a diplomatic language, having originally been used in this regard by the sovereigns and the lower nobility. The Hanseatic League did not become central for the implementation of Middle Low German before 1370. The pragmatic situations were trade, administration and money transfer, as well as diplomatic correspondence. Middle Low German was not broadly used for literature and religious didactics—sermons, catechisms, and prayer books—before the end of the fourteenth century, concurrently with the establishment of classical Middle Low German and its wider expansion into pragmatic areas of use. An exception to this timeline are, as mentioned above, the revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg, which have not survived in their original language.

One consequence of the comparatively short and undeveloped tradition of religious writing in Middle Low German was that religious terminology was not yet semantically fixed in the fifteenth century. For example, an analysis of the pre-Reformation Middle Low German translation of the Bible made it clear that, compared to English and French, Middle Low German integrated and used fewer Latin words. While English and French commonly adopted technical theological terms, and in this way could pass on their original specific semantic dimensions, Middle Low German translations frequently strived to employ existing terms from juridical and

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[7] One of the few exceptions is Mähl, Stefan. *Geven vnde screven tho deme holme: Variablenlinguistische Untersuchungen zur mittelniederdeutschen Schreibsprache in Stockholm.* Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för Svensk Folkkultur, 2008.

[8] Exemplary on the situation in Cologne: Mihm, Arend. "Mehrsprachigkeit und Sprachdynamik im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit." In Moulin-Franhänel, ed. *Sprache in der Stadt*, 11–54.

[9] For example *Chronik des Franziskaners Detmar*, late fourteenth century; *Chronica novella*, Dominican Hermann Korner, early fifteenth century.

diplomatic language, assigning them a new, religious meaning.[10] Middle Low German religious texts became more common with the *Devotio moderna* movement, which developed a language variant slightly different from the Hanseatic Middle Low German.[11]

In the fifteenth century in particular, many religious texts were written and diffused in manuscript form, but never subsequently adapted for printing: *Joseps Sündenspiegel*,[12] *Redentiner Osterspiel*,[13] *Marienklage*,[14] *Visio Philiberti, Van Hennenberch Fredrik, Wyngarde der sele*[15] and the texts contained in the *Hartebok* compilation.[16] It is unclear why these were never printed—as we will see, a general desire to print original Middle Low German texts was evident, although to very different degrees in the different towns and at the different printing presses.

Even though the print production of the Middle Low German region cannot be measured against the immense output and variety of southern centers such as Strasbourg, Augsburg and Nuremberg,[17] production in the region had some distinct features, particularly a strong focus on devotional literature in the vernacular. The volume and importance of this branch of production have been widely neglected. The incunabula and early imprints produced in the northern German vernacular have received little scholarly attention in line with the extremely negative reputation that this vernacular and its artistic and creative potential has traditionally had among scholars.[18] Middle Low German was primarily considered a

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[10] Cf. Ahldén, Tage R. *Die Kölner Bibel-Frühdrucke: Entstehungsgeschichte, Stellung im niederdeutschen Schrifttum.* Lund: Berlingska boktryckeriet, 1937.

[11] Peters, "Mittelniederdeutsche Sprache," 83.

[12] Schütz, Eva, ed. *Joseps Sündenspiegel: Eine niederdeutsche Lehrdichtung des 15. Jahrhunderts; kommentierte Textausgabe.* Köln: Böhlau, 1973.

[13] For other examples of the rich Middle Low German tradition of religious drama, see Lübben, "Zur Charakteristik."

[14] Schönemann, Otto, ed. *Der Sündenfall und Marienklage: Zwei niederdeutsche Schauspiele aus Hs. der Wolfenbüttler Bibliothek*. Hannover: Rümpler, 1855.

[15] Cordes, Gerhard. "Mittelniederdeutsche Dichtung und Gebrauchsliteratur." In *Handbuch zur niederdeutschen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*. Ed. by Gerhard Cordes and Dieter Möhn, 351–390. Berlin: Schmidt, 1983, ibid., 357–360.

[16] Langbroek, Erika. "Das Hartebok: Ein Haus- und Gebrauchsbuch?" *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 61 (2006).

[17] On the differences between the northern German Hanseatic cities as sites of book production and places of long-distance trade to supply the Scandinavian market, see Nickel, Holger. "Zu Buchhandel und Buchproduktion im nordeuropäischen Raum während der Inkunabelzeit." In *Bibliophilie und Buchgeschichte in Finnland: Aus Anlass des 500. Jubiläums des Missale Aboense*. Ed. by Esko Häkli, 25–31. Berlin: Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, 1988.

[18] Still a valid overview of the literary production of the region: Jellinghaus, Hermann. *Geschichte der mittelniederdeutschen Literatur*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1925.

pragmatic dialect for the trade and exchange of goods within the Hanseatic League, and its role within the context of trade and exchange resulted in an insufficient literary landscape, since "the merchants did not have the time to deal with literature."[19] This fact, however, only reinforces the necessity of acknowledging the Middle Low German area as a cultural region of its own. Furthermore, studies of political history show that the cultural and political connections between north and south were limited and basically restricted to a trading route from the Hanseatic towns to the southern midlands, while the political missions of representatives from the Hanseatic towns only occasionally attended the Imperial Diets.[20]

The spread and use of Middle Low German as a written language, on the one hand, and the print production in this language, on the other hand, led to the formation of a relatively homogenous cultural space, clearly separated from the southern region and shaped by a common vernacular that had been the lingua franca in pragmatic texts since the end of the fourteenth century at least.

I.2 *Print Production in Middle Low German 1470–1517*

The impact of the invention of the printed book is still a topic of discussion among scholars of medieval and early modern history, and it is probably necessary to take a different approach to the debate regarding the Middle Low German region. "The printing revolution" was, and still is, a catchy name for the early development of book printing, beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century and culminating in sudden, widespread production in the period of the Peasants' War and the Reformation. It is the preferred term of scholars of the sixteenth century for explaining the sudden speed of events in the 1520s.[21] Undoubtedly, reading ability and at least vernacular literacy were widespread among burghers, lay brethren

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[19] Wernicke, Horst. "Literarische Rezeptionsbedingungen im Hanseraum aus historischer Sicht." In *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters im europäischen Kontext*. Ed. by Rolf Bräuer, 135–147. Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1998, ibid., 145.

[20] Dirlmeier, Ulf. "Zu den Beziehungen zwischen oberdeutschen und norddeutschen Städten im Spätmittelalter." In *Nord und Süd in der deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*. Ed. by Werner Paravicini and Karl Jordan, 203–218. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990, ibid., 211.

[21] Reinhard Bendix uses the term "intellektuelle Mobilisierung," Hugo Kuhn writes about "Literaturexplosion" and Rüdiger Schnell about "Bildungsexplosion." See also Scribner, Robert W. *For the sake of simple folk: popular propaganda for the German Reformation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The printing revolution in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005 [1983].

and sisters and craftspeople in the towns, and book printing satisfied their needs to a formerly unknown extent.[22] In the first thirty years of book printing, Latin books and books in the vernacular were similar in size, price and quality, leading to the conclusion that the reading public was generally the same for books in Latin and in the vernacular: the educated upper class, consisting of members of the upper nobility, lawyers and administrative staff, physicians, clergy and well-educated merchants. Ex libris analysis confirms these groups as incunabula owners.[23] As we know from burgher's wills and from the records of book purchase orders, spiritual guidebooks, Bible translations and edifying literature made up the majority of those books owned by laypeople.[24]

At the same time, numerous factors speak against calling this process a revolution, as medievalists in particular have pointed out[25]—the book printing technique was undoubtedly a motor for the events that marked the beginning of the early modern period, but for the first fifty to seventy years after its initial invention, book printing was anything but revolutionary in several regards.[26] The first book printers lacked the experience, the money and the flexibility to effectively determine which books might become bestsellers—or even allow them to recoup their costs—and thus favored well-known texts. Many printing houses and presses had their starting point when a local church or episcopal seat ordered an edition of a Missale or Breviarium, and the printer knew that his visit to the town in question would pay off. The majority of the texts printed as incunabula, such as the books ordered by the church or schoolbooks and

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[22] Gow, Andrew. "Challenging the Protestant Paradigm: Bible Reading in Lay and Urban Contexts of the later Middle Ages." In *Scripture and pluralism: Reading the Bible in the religiously plural worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, 161–191. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

[23] Brandis, Thilo. "Handschriften- und Buchproduktion im 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert." In *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit: Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1981*. Ed. by Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann, 176–193. Stuttgart 1984, ibid., 179.

[24] Costard, Monika. "Die 'Imitatio Christi' im Kontext spätmittelalterlicher Laienlektüre im Mutterland der Devotio moderna." In *Aus dem Winkel in die Welt: Die Bücher des Thomas von Kempen und ihre Schicksale*. Ed. by Ulrike Bodemann and Nikolaus Staubach, 36–64. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2006, ibid., 42–44.

[25] Schulze, Winfried, et al. "Begann die Neuzeit mit dem Buchdruck? Ist die Ära der Typographie im Zeitalter der digitalen Medien endgütlig vorbei? Podiumsdiskussion." In *Kommunikation und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Ed. by Johannes Burkhardt, 11–38. München: Oldenbourg, 2005.

[26] Eisermann, Falk. "Mixing Pop and Politics. Origins, Transmission, and Readers of Illustrated broadsides in fifteenth century Germany." In *Incunabula and their readers. Printing, selling and using books in the fifteenth century*. Ed. by Kristian Jensen, 159–177. London: British Library, 2003.

dictionaries in university towns, had a clear and obvious public. It was a bit more adventurous to print texts that had already circulated widely in manuscript form, but had a more diffuse public, such as historiographical works, books of knowledge, pragmatic texts i.e. calendars, and catechetical and devotional books. The latter in particular became an increasingly important part of overall print production.

These devotional books in the vernacular were among the most progressive of printed products, not because of their content, but because their mass production marked a new quality and quantity of lay devotional reading. They were probably also the most dangerous texts for the early printers to print since the Church followed two different principles: administering pastoral care and providing laypeople with as much spiritual advice as possible, and restricting laypeople's options for accessing religious knowledge without the supervision of a priest. The means by which the Church could control print production were not very advanced, and both clerical and lay audiences were interested in devotional books in the vernacular, as is shown by the reconstruction of the libraries of female monasteries, for example.[27]

Not only was the Church's policy of restricting lay reading an obstacle for the first printers, the lack of experience of many authors and compilators in addressing the laity, their lack of interest in writing in the vernacular, and even problems in diffusing the texts in regions with many different dialects were also factors that limited or at least slowed down the immediate success of printing, especially printing in the vernacular. Consequently, the project of lay didactics and lay reading was more of a dialectical process with steps forward and steps backward, and not a linear history of success.[28] As a consequence, medieval scholarship has frequently doubted and diminished the printing press as a "revolutionary" development.[29] Considering the difference in language development and text tradition observed for the Middle Low German region, the question of a printing revolution must probably be answered even differently for this region.

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[27] Kruse, Britta-Juliane. "Virtuelle und erhaltene Büchersammlungen aus den Augustiner-Chorfrauenstiften Steterburg und Heiningen." In *Sammler und Bibliotheken im Wandel der Zeiten.* Ed. by Sabine Graef, 97–115. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2010.

[28] Schreiner, Klaus. "Grenzen literarischer Kommunikation: Bemerkungen zur religiösen und sozialen Dialektik der Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformation." In Grenzmann/Stackmann, eds. *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 1–20, ibid., 7–11.

[29] Eisermann, "Mixing Pop and Politics," 175, with further references.

A quantitative analysis of the works printed in the Middle Low German vernacular is not unconditionally a suitable tool for the characterization of a cultural space, since there are no works on aspects necessary for a correct estimation of the importance of incunabula: to begin with, the parallel production of manuscripts and early printings and the influence these had on each other has not been adequately researched, and those who do work in this field share a general scepticism about the possibility of developing a formula that would be appropriate for all kinds of texts.[30] In the field of religious texts in the vernacular, only those produced by well-known authors have generally been traced back to their tradition in manuscript form. There are no quantitative analyses or comparisons of which books were first produced and diffused as manuscripts, and thereafter in printed form, of how many manuscripts were never prepared for printing or of what sort of manuscripts went unprinted. Consequently, there has also been no assessment of whether or not, for example, the Middle Low German region was less conservative and made the transition from manuscript traditions to printed documents earlier than other regions. Much more research on individual texts and their textual traditions would be needed in order to arrive at a more accurate estimation of the different cultural areas printed books came from and how this shaped the Middle Low German region as a cultural space. Also a clear demarcation of Middle Low German versus Latin versus High German books is almost impossible—symptomatically, the first known Middle Low German print from Cologne 1473 was a *Vocabularius ex quo* in Latin and Low German.

Second—and this is a problem that will not be resolved by more research—there is no information about the importance of books as commodities for long-distance trade. Some of the towns of the Hanseatic League partially met the need for printed books in the Baltic Sea regions, as we know from the remaining libraries of the monasteries in Swedish and Baltic towns. Their supply came from Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Lübeck, Cologne and Rostock, the majority coming from the southern centers, but the monastic libraries were not dependent on books in the vernacular to the same extent. The latter were, however, certainly an export product for towns where part of the population was either German-speaking or

[30] See the contributions in the anthology Dicke, Gerd and Klaus Grubmüller, eds. *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003; and Mentzel-Reuters, Arno. "Das Nebeneinander von Handschrift und Buchdruck im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert." In *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch*. Ed. by Ursula Rautenberg, 411–442. Berlin: de Gruyter Saur, 2010.

bilingual—Stockholm, Riga, Reval, Gdańsk—but there are no records that confirm the importance of books as goods for long-distance trade, and in these towns very few private libraries have survived that would help to clarify the trading practices for Middle Low German incunabula.[31] The few records we have indicate that some of the books bought in medieval Scandinavia came from Rostock and Lübeck, but others came from Paris, Strasbourg and the various other printing centers of the day, with Middle Low German books constituting only a very insignificant number of these.[32]

There is even a lack of records for the short-distance trade in books. Consequently, many questions about the idiosyncracies of the northern towns in terms of book culture cannot be answered. In a town such as Hamburg, there were probably so many manuscript copyists controlling the book market that the town did not need its own printing press until around 1500, and in the towns around the Baltic Sea many people read Latin, Middle Low German and other German dialects so well that they did not rely entirely on imports from Cologne and Lübeck. In the final analysis, we have no information about how many of the printed books survived until modern day. There is a difference of about one hundred titles between the 1931 Borchling and Claussen catalogue of Middle Low German printed documents, which served as the status quo before the Second World War and which contains a number of titles that were reconstructed but never found, and the British Library's incunabula catalogue ISTC, which contains only those that verifiably exist in today's libraries, pointing to significant inconsistencies in all quantitative research on incunabula.[33]

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[31] Nickel, "Zu Buchhandel," 27.

[32] See the database in Undorf, Wolfgang. "From Gutenberg to Luther—transnational print cultures in Scandinavia 1450–1525." Dissertation, Philosophische Fakultät I, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2012. It contains only about forty titles in Middle Low German, the majority of them the Revelations of St. Birgitta.

[33] Another result of these inconsistencies is that the existing catalogues often differ regarding titles, authors and dating of the prints. For this study, I have generally used the titles as contained in the British Library's *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC) and the *Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts* (VD16). In those cases where author assignments or dating differ seriously, I have added information from *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (GW). Of the various potential cataloguing numbers, only those from *Niederdeutsche Bibliographie* by Borchling/Claussen (BC) and GW are included. An unsolicited yet unavoidable effect of this is that the titles are sometimes given in modern standard German and sometimes in Middle Low German, according to the ISTC format. The titles in standard German in the ISTC also contain a number of, for example, "Gebetbuch" or "Zehn Gebote;" in these cases, I have added a Middle Low German title from the incipit for identification and quote according to these.

The situation for the prints after 1500 is even worse,[34] and the determination of the language must rely on the sometimes-diverging information from the catalogues.[35]

On the other hand, the adaptation of texts from other cultural regions in particular shows the peculiarities of Middle Low German translators, printing presses and production sites. It also verifies the oft-assumed dominance of religious didactical texts in the region's print production.[36]

From about 1480 on—only a few years after the first printing press was established in the Middle Low German region—major changes occurred in incunabula production: besides the luxurious Latin folio books, which were the main product during the first thirty years, the number of cheaper books and broadsheets in the vernacular increased, and with it the number of people who were able to buy books. Book printing had become its own branch of industry and trade; the types and techniques had been homogenized.[37] This professionalization is not immediately visible in the Middle Low German area. The towns where printers were situated in

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The often-lengthy titles from the VD16 have been shortened. Complete bibliographic information about the incunabula and early imprints is given in the appendix.

[34] The catalogue of Middle Low German printed books produced by Borchling/Claussen contains 348 individual prints for the years 1473–1500, and another 242 for the years up to 1517. The numbers from the modern catalogues, the British Library's ISTC (296 incunabula in Middle Low German), GW (320 incunabula in Middle Low German) and the VD16 are somewhat smaller, since printed books have been re-dated; some that are no longer identifiable have been eliminated and some single exemplars were assigned to already existing editions. For printed material from the years 1500–1517, Borchling/Claussen served as the basis for the search for surviving exemplars. In those cases where they could be found in the VD16, the bibliographical information from this catalogue (in the format of its online version at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) is provided. In other cases, when the VD16 number was missing, the information is drawn from the OPAC of the library holding a copy. For the most part, it was difficult to identify exemplars by using the VD16, as it does not provide information about the location of the texts, and in contrast to the ISTC, it does not include information about the language. Thus the results concerning the period of 1500–1517 are much more speculative than the ones for the years prior to 1500.

[35] The selection for this study follows the Borchling/Claussen selection and the determination of the Middle Low German language in GW and ISTC.

[36] Brandis, "Handschriften- und Buchproduktion," 180, assumes only 5–7 percent of the overall print production in the German lands was in the vernacular, divided equally among religious, political and pragmatic texts. Wernicke, "Literarische Rezeptionsbedingungen," comprises the quantitative research about the Middle Low German incunabula—which he assumes makes up only a negligible amount of the entire incunabula production—with religious texts in the majority. Similarly Freytag, Hartmut. "Zum Beispiel Lübeck: eine Skizze über Literatur in der Hansestadt während der Jahre 1200 bis 1600." *Jahrbuch der Oswald-von-Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft* 10 (1998).

[37] Brandis, "Handschriften- und Buchproduktion," 189.

the region were Magdeburg,[38] Lübeck,[39] Cologne,[40] Hamburg,[41] Stendal[42] and Rostock,[43] with single occurrences in Leipzig, Antwerp, Mainz, Strasbourg, and Paris. In Braunschweig, after 1500, a few Middle Low German prints were produced. Besides Middle Low German, other German dialects were also printed, especially in Cologne, Magdeburg and Leipzig. Cologne and Magdeburg were interfaces to other vernacular regions in terms of dialects and comprehension, and thus Cologne was the site for the printing of some texts originally written in the Low Countries and then translated—examples include the *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum* by Gerhard von Vliederhoven and the *Christenspiegel* by Dietrich Coelde van Munster.[44] Many of the vernacular texts produced in Cologne were not Middle Low German, but Ripuarian. Magdeburg and Leipzig, meanwhile, were interfaces for texts from the Upper German region. The Leipzig printer Conrad Kachelofen produced eight books written in Middle Low German—23 percent of the literature he produced was of an edifying nature, while the other Leipzig printers were clearly connected to the town's university and produced texts accordingly.[45]

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[38] Altmann, Ursula. "Die Leistungen der Drucker mit Namen Brandis im Rahmen der Buchgeschichte des 15. Jahrhunderts." Humboldt-Univ., Diss. Berlin, 2005.

[39] Bruns, Alken, ed. *Die Lübecker Buchdrucker im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert: Buchdruck für den Ostseeraum*. Heide in Holstein: Westholsteinische Verl.-Anst. Boyens, 1994.

[40] Schmitz, Wolfgang. *Die Überlieferung deutscher Texte im Kölner Buchdruck des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Univ., Habil Köln, 1990; Corsten, Severin. "Universität und Buchdruck in Köln. Versuch eines Überblicks für das 15. Jahrhundert." In *Buch und Text im 15. Jahrhundert.* Ed. by Lotte Hellinga and Helmar Härtel, 189–199. Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981.

[41] Kilian, Joachim. *Studien zu den Hamburger niederdeutschen Volksbüchern von 1502*. Hamburg: Wachholtz, 1937. This study divides the production of the printing presses in Hamburg into four groups. Before 1500, only one Practica was produced. In the years 1502–1503, eight books in Middle Low German were printed, this being the peak of vernacular print production.

[42] Kunze, Max, ed. *Buch-Geschichten: 500 Jahre Drucker, Verleger und Bibliotheken in Stendal*. Ruhpolding: Rutzen, 2007.

[43] Krüger, Nilüfer. *525 Jahre Buchdruck in Rostock: Die Druckerei der Brüder vom Gemeinsamen Leben*. Rostock: Universitätsbibliothek, 2001.

[44] On cultural relations between the Dutch and the Low German language areas see the contributions in Hermans, Jos M. M., ed. *Humanistische Buchkultur: Deutsch-niederländische Kontakte im Spätmittelalter* (*1450–1520*). Münster, Hamburg: LIT, 1997; and Peters, Robert and Jos Hermans, eds. *Buch, Literatur und Sprache in den östlichen Niederlanden und im nordwestlichen Deutschland*. Münster: Aschendorff, 2006.

[45] Döring, Thomas. "Der Leipziger Buchdruck vor der Reformation." In *Bücher, Drucker, Bibliotheken in Mitteldeutschland: Neue Forschungen zur Kommunikations- und Mediengeschichte um 1500*. Ed. by Enno Bünz, 87–98. Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verl., 2006, ibid., 95–96.

In Strasbourg there were three Middle Low German texts printed, in Paris there were two, and another two were produced in Antwerp.[46] One of the Paris incunabula, a Middle Low German version of the prayer collection *Seven tyden*, mentions not only where it was printed, but also where it was sold:

> Disse boke synt to paris ghedrucket vp de ostersche sprake vnde syn to lubeke to kope bi dem markede ofte vp dem orde van den widen kram boden.[47]
>
> [These books are printed in Paris in the Eastern language and can be bought in Lübeck at the market or can be ordered from Weiter Kramboden (a street in Lübeck).]

This very specific local information would have been of little interest to a Parisian public, so the book must have been printed in Paris but meant for sale in Lübeck, which overall diminishes the importance of the production site as the diffusion site, as well as all assertions about local needs and local markets and their impact on book production in a certain town or area. That, on the other hand, books printed in Lübeck were goods for long-distance trade is proven by the fact that the Lübeck printer's catalogues included a couple of texts with clear regional assignments: breviaries for the Episcopal seats in Meißen, Schleswig, Hamburg, Odense and Lubusz, as well as for the Teutonic Order, and a *Graduale Suecicum*.

The relation between printed documents produced in Latin and in the vernacular differed from one printing press to another, as did specialization regarding book content, especially in Lübeck and Cologne, where many presses existed simultaneously and the market required specialization and differentiation among the books on offer.

The Brethren of the Common Life in Marienthal (in the Rhine River Valley) printed twenty-one titles before 1500, one in Middle Low German and three in Middle German. As they were located south of the language boundary, it is hard to determine the basis for the Brethren's decision to print a Middle Low German *Life of St. Martin*. More obvious

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[46] Leloux, Hermanus J. *Mittelniederdeutsche, in den Niederlanden entstandene Manuskripte und Frühdrucke: Eine Übersicht über literarische Wechselbeziehungen zwischen den Niederlanden und Niederdeutschland*. 3. Aufl. Bonn: Presse- und Kulturabt. der Kgl. Niederländ. Botschaft, 1981. Leloux lists—besides some manuscripts—two incunabula, both adaptations of courtly novels: Paris et Vienne [Low German]. Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, [after 19 May] 1488; Historia septem sapientium Romae [Dutch] Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romen. Antwerp: Claes Leeu, 11 Apr. 1488.

[47] Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyden (Horae). Paris 1500, fol. 144r.

was the use of the vernacular in Lüneburg: one of the six incunabula printed by Johan Luce was a Middle Low German rosary by the author Herman Nitzschewitz, a translation of his so-called *Psalter of Mary* written in the Cistercian monastery of Zinna, located between Berlin and Leipzig.[48] The rosary is extraordinary in its abundant use of woodcuts to illustrate the prayers, but since there is very little text accompanying the pictures, the adaptation for the local dialect cannot have taken too much of an effort. There was no further print production in Lüneburg following this until the seventeenth century.[49]

These production sites for Middle Low German texts were somewhat random. There were other places where the production of Middle Low German books seemed to be much more part of a conscious marketing strategy. Usually two factors are mentioned for the development of printing presses: an ecclesiastical institution giving an initial order for a printed book and the existence of a university. The first factor was important for initially motivating a printer to move to a town, but how and to what extent he then complemented the ecclesiastical commissioned pieces with independently produced titles was determined by the printer's assessment of the market. In the Middle Low German area, these assessments often seemed to lead to the production of works of a religious character in both Latin and the vernacular. It cannot be substantiated that the second factor, the existence of a university, was crucial for print production in the Middle Low German area based on the situation in the university towns of Cologne and Rostock.

In the case of Cologne, the university could have been an important factor for the book printing business, and in fact some texts that were produced seem to have been directly connected to the curriculum.[50] But the university's attitude about book printing was distinct from the systematic use of the new technique that Klaus Wolf has determined was central to the Vienna School's text production.[51] Both the universities in Cologne and Rostock not only made no systematic use of the option of

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[48] Nitzschewitz, Hermannus. Der goldene Rosenkranz [Low German] De gulden rosenkrans der soten gotliken leue. [Lüneburg: Johann Luce, about 1494]. BC 235, GW M27155.

[49] Reske, Christoph. *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet: Auf der Grundlage des gleichnamigen Werkes von Josef Benzing.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007, 571–573.

[50] Corsten, "Universität und Buchdruck in Köln," 188–189.

[51] Wolf, Klaus. *Hof, Universität, Laien: Literatur- und sprachgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum deutschen Schrifttum der Wiener Schule des Spätmittelalters.* Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006.

book printing, but in part even tried to restrict the distribution of printed books, with the result that there is little concurrency between the curricula and print production in the two towns. Even though Rostock had had a university since 1419, the incunabula market was not nearly as disparate and lively as was the case in Cologne, or even in nearby Lübeck. Only one printing press, located in the monastery of the Brethren of the Common Life, was active in Rostock before the beginning of the Reformation.[52] Its production was much too small and sporadic for a regular contact with the university. The printing office focused on didactical literature conceived as guidelines for priests; *Sermones de sanctis et de tempore* by the Nuremberg Dominican Johannes Herolt, Bonaventura, and Anselm of Canterbury. Some books used in school education to serve the needs of a non-clerical public were produced by the Brethren—for example, Aelius Donatus' *Ars minor*.[53] However, the Brethren did not produce any books of religious didactics in the vernacular; the two Middle Low German texts produced by this press were a book of templates for letters to different authorities and a practica.[54] Considering the importance of lay reading for the establishment of Brethren of the Common Life houses and the *Devotio moderna's* emphasis on reading, book printing in Rostock seems to have been more a means of economic support for the convent than a key plank in its project for lay education. The lack of texts in the vernacular among those produced in Rostock points to the university and the clergy as relatively secure target groups for the purchase of the books produced by the Brethren. However, the total production was far too limited to meet the overall needs of the university. Obviously, the university's requirements—and those of lay readers in Rostock—were satisfied by the printers in nearby Lübeck, where, for example, a relatively large number of pedagogical books about rhetoric and grammar, which were probably sent to Rostock, were printed. As for Latin books, they could be purchased from any city.

A comparison of the cities indicates that the greatest number of incunabula in the vernacular was produced in Magdeburg (46 of 135, or

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[52] Krüger, Nilüfer. "Von der Klosterdruckerei zur wissenschaftlichen Bibliothek. Das Michaelis-Kloster der 'Brüder vom gemeinsamen Leben' in Rostock." *Bibliothek und Wissenschaft. Ein Jahrbuch Heidelberger Bibliothekare* 37 (2004) connects the printing press to the charitable activities of the Brethren, such as a German school for the poor, but also the needs of the university. Considering the limited production in the vernacular, the first assertion seems somewhat far-fetched.

[53] Krüger, *525 Jahre Buchdruck*, 11–19, with a complete list of the products of the office.

[54] See appendix under *Formulare* and *Practica*.

40 percent) and in Lübeck (39 percent). All of these except one were in Middle Low German. Stendal, where printer Joachim Westphal opened the first press in 1483, also proved to be a popular place for the production of incunabula in the vernacular, even though business was much more modest there. Only one of the seven books Westphal produced was in Latin: the others were in Middle Low German.[55]

In Rostock, seven out of thirty incunabula were in Middle Low German (23 percent); between 1500–1517, seven out of thirty-eight (18 percent). In Braunschweig and Hamburg, production before 1517 was very limited: only one book was produced in Braunschweig, and of the six books produced in Hamburg, five were in Latin. Large-scale print production was not established in either town until much later. In Braunschweig, Hans Dorn was active printing books from 1502 until 1526. He produced eighteen titles before 1517 of which eight were in Latin and ten in Middle Low German (56 percent). In Hamburg, Hans Borchard and the Printer of Iegher were active from 1500 until 1510; the first produced three Middle Low German books, the second four books and a broadsheet about the Battle of Hemmingstedt.[56] This means that in these towns the majority of the production was in Middle Low German once it started after 1500.

Quite the opposite was true for Cologne: of 1625 incunabula printed before 1500, only ninety-eight were in Middle Low German, with another fifteen in other German dialects (6 percent). This did not change in any significant way after 1500. The small number of books produced in the vernacular was similar for all Cologne printing presses: contrary to Lübeck, Hamburg and Stendal, there was no printing press in Cologne specializing in books in the vernacular. Johann Landen,[57] Heinrich von Neuß, Richard and Anna Koelhoff, Heinrich Quentell and Hermann Bungart had only a few German books in their repertoire, and they often printed the same book several times instead of producing new titles in the vernacular.[58] In the house of Heinrich Quentell and his heirs, thirty to forty books were produced each year, with only one to four of these in Middle Low German.

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[55] Westphal also printed together with Jakob Ravenstein in Magdeburg for two years. Nitzsche, Ina. "Die Buchdruckerkunst im 15. Jahrhundert in Stendal." In Kunze, ed. *Buch-Geschichten*, 19–21.

[56] Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 332; the broadsheet is not indicated in the VD16.

[57] The only Low German print before 1500 from this office: Landfrieden, Ordnung des Kammergerichts [Low German]. Worms, 7 und 17 Aug. 1495. Cologne: [Johann Landen], 16 Jan. 1496. Also recorded as [Johann Koelhoff, the Younger]. BC 267A, GW M22193.

[58] The assignation of the years 1500–1517 relies on the essays on the different towns and offices in Reske, *Buchdrucker*.

The printing press Retro Minores produced almost entirely in Latin: of the fifty-eight titles it produced between 1497 and 1504,[59] only two were in the Low German vernacular (two additional broadsheets were in Dutch and German), a Latin Low German *Vocabularius* and the didactical verse poem *Der Vogel sprake*.[60] Two early printings are assigned to the printer Rudolf Spot, both of them in Middle Low German: *Eyn fruchtbair Spygel* by Dietrich Coelde and a story about Constantinople.[61]

Even though there were several original and interesting examples of edifying literature in the vernacular from Cologne, these books did not play a significant role in the overall production in that town. Here as well, there is one obvious exception regarding a specific genre of edifying literature: Johann Landen (sixty titles between 1496 and 1521) produced only Latin books until 1507, but, following his first German production, the *Judenspiegel* by Johannes Pfefferkorn, he obviously recognized the potential and printed another seventeen books in German—half of those were anti-Jewish pamphlets by Pfefferkorn.[62] The subsequent conflict between Pfefferkorn, the Dominicans in Cologne and the theologian Johannes Reuchlin about whether the Talmud and other Jewish books posed a danger to Christian society, considerably increased book production in the vernacular in Cologne, even though major parts of the entire "Reuchlin conflict" were staged in Latin, especially those in defense of the Hebraist and his statements in favor of the Hebrew books. The other side, the anti-Jewish propaganda by Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, was more clearly vernacular in nature: before 1517, there were nineteen Pfefferkorn texts printed in Cologne, only five of which were in Latin.

In Magdeburg as well,[63] the production of edifying texts with a distinct anti-Jewish focus represented a substantial proportion of Middle Low German texts: between 1500 and 1517, eleven Latin and six German books[64] were printed there, three of them including the story about the "desecration of the Host by Jews in Sternberg" (which was also printed

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[59] Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 423–427.

[60] [Cologne: Retro Minores (Martin von Werden?), about 1500]. BC 1260, GW M51323.

[61] Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 427–428.

[62] Reske calls this specialization "theologische Werke erbaulichen Charakters in kleinem Format". *Buchdrucker*, 426.

[63] For general information about the Magdeburg printer Koch: Suckow, Ninon. " 'Impressum Magdeborch arte Simonis Koch de Wylborch.' Simon Koch und der Beginn des Buchdrucks in Magdeburg." In Bünz, ed. *Bücher, Drucker, Bibliotheken*, 111–131.

[64] Practica, Simon Koch, 1504, BC 382, not in VD16; one German edition of *Imitatio Christi* printed by Moritz Brandis, BC 354; ten prints by Jacob Winter in VD16, among these the Wilsnack miracle (BC 457). Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 578–579.

once in Lübeck, Cologne, Basel and Bamberg).[65] The documents are also an interesting example of Magdeburg as a place of contact between the two language areas: Simon Koch printed the same text about the event twice in the same year, with the same woodcut on the front page, once in Middle Low German and once in German.[66] This case of anti-Jewish propaganda, centering around the purchase of hosts from an impoverished priest by a Jewish family allegedly in order to stab the hosts for entertainment purposes during their daughter's wedding in the town of Sternberg in Mecklenburg, was characterized by documents in both Latin and German but, unlike in the Reuchlin case, the Latin documents did not defend Jews. The propaganda, which contained a legend in hagiographic style as well as records of the torture and interrogation of the accused Jews, resulted in the death of twenty-two Jews at the stake and the total expulsion of the Jews from the county.[67]

It is said that in general terms the relative number of books produced in the vernacular decreased somewhat in the decades after 1500.[68] This is difficult to verify for the Middle Low German region and definitely not true for Lübeck, where the relative production of books in the vernacular increased at an accelerated rate after 1500[69] following the success of the incunabula printers, who had already found and established a market for religious books in the vernacular. Between 1500 and 1517, forty-five books were printed in the Hanseatic town,[70] twenty-four in Middle Low German

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[65] See appendix under *Sternberg*.

[66] GW M44009 and GW M44007, see appendix.

[67] See below chapter V on Christians and Jews.

[68] Lohmeier, Dieter. "Die Frühzeit des Buchdrucks in Lübeck." In *Die Lübecker Buchdrucker im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert: Buchdruck für den Ostseeraum*. Ed. by Alken Bruns, 11–53. Heide in Holstein: Westholsteinische Verl.-Anst. Boyens, 1994, ibid., 44.

[69] Book production in Lübeck is relatively well researched. The Poppy Printer in particular has been the object of various studies. Most of these deny any connection between production in Lübeck and the rest of the Middle Low German area, as Lübeck was the production site of some of the most well-known and original texts written in Middle Low German. Menke, Hubertus. "Die literarische Stadtkultur Lübecks um 1500." In *Reynke de Vos—Lübeck 1498: Zur Geschichte und Rezeption eines deutsch-niederländischen Bestsellers*. Ed. by Amand Berteloot, 81–101. Münster et al.: LIT, 1998; Nybøle, R. Steinar. *Reynke de Vos: Ein Beitrag zur Grammatik der frühen Lübecker Druckersprache.* Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1997; Peters, "Die Rolle der Hanse;" Schwencke, Olaf. "Ein Kreis mitttelalterlicher Erbauungsschriftsteller in Lübeck." *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 88 (1965); Sodmann, Timothy. "Die Druckerei mit den drei Mohnköpfen." In *Franco-Saxonica: münstersche Studien zur niederländischen und niederdeutschen Philologie.* Ed. by Robert Damme, 343–360. Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1990.

[70] For Stephan Arndes, thirty titles are referred to in the VD16 up to 1519, twelve for Georg Richolff the Elder up to 1516 and six for Hans van Ghetelen and the Poppy Printer up to the year 1527. Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 558–561.

and twenty-one in Latin. Stephan Arndes was responsible for twenty-nine of these titles, eleven in Latin and the rest in German (62 percent). The other printing presses in Lübeck also show affinities for certain types of books (which led to attempts by scholars on behalf of each printing press to define their audience):[71] the Poppy Printer produced only about one third of its books in Latin, the majority of the texts in the vernacular being of a religious didactical character.[72] Generally, the years after 1500 were marked by economic hardship for the Lübeck printers: ecclesiastical commissions were printed in other towns such as Paris and Speyer, and printers fell into debt, had to close their businesses or could not afford to pay their employees. Given the relatively small number of books produced, it is apparent that none of the printing presses in Lübeck were used to their full capacity after 1500,[73] and it is significant that they chose to increase their production in the vernacular under these circumstances.

The printers in each of these towns also produced broadsheets. It is difficult to treat the catalogues addressing these as equivalent to the catalogues of incunabula and early printed documents. Overall, a quantitative analysis of these all too fleeting and short-lived products seems pointless. Nonetheless, the numbers and types of broadsheets catalogued in each of these towns is in line with those for printed books: in Cologne, for example, 106 broadsheets have been identified and verified, and of these eighteen are indulgence letters, twenty-three are other Papal letters and announcements (interdicts, bullae etc.), thirteen are city council communications of various sorts and twenty-nine are documents produced by the emperor, the king or local nobility. In Lübeck, on the other hand, eighty broadsheets have been recorded, thirty-eight of them being indulgence letters, along with nine bullae.[74] In each of the towns, the different types of texts can clearly be assigned to specific printers: for example, one would specialize in the indulgence letters and another would receive contracts from the local secular authorities.

To sum up, with regard to the quantitative distribution of books printed in Latin and Middle Low German, we can see a clear difference between the main printing sites of Cologne on the one hand and Lübeck and Magdeburg on the other: while Cologne printers mainly focused on

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71 Menke, "Die literarische Stadtkultur," 83.

72 Sodmann, "Druckerei mit den drei Mohnköpfen," 352–353.

73 Lohmeier, "Frühzeit," 44.

74 Eisermann, Falk. *Verzeichnis der typographischen Einblattdrucke des 15. Jahrhunderts im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation: VE 15.* 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2004.

incunabula in Latin from the outset, the Lübeck entrepreneurs focused on an audience reading in the vernacular, increasingly printing Middle Low German titles over time. The situation in Magdeburg was quite similar to that in Lübeck, a result of the fact that several printers moved between the towns. Even in towns with a more limited production, the tendency to have favored either Latin or Middle Low German is apparent: Rostock, dominated by the Brethren of the Common Life, was primarily a market for Latin books, while Stendal, Hamburg and Braunschweig focused on books in the vernacular; in the two latter towns, production only began after 1500. The specialization of certain printers—which has been the focus for much of the research on incunabula—seems to commonly indicate general trends in each of the towns where print production was carried out, with either a large market for books in the vernacular or a general bias against such books. It also seems to be the case that the trend in each of these towns was resistant to the shifts and changes that occurred over time: if a town had already proven to be a market for books in the vernacular, then the production of these either remained constant or even increased slightly, as was the case in Lübeck, whereas the more conservative towns of Cologne and Rostock did not noticeably increase the number of books printed in the vernacular after 1500. In those towns where production only began after 1500, such as Hamburg and Lüneburg, a clear focus on books in the vernacular from the outset is apparent, reflecting the general increase in production of books in the vernacular at this point. The conservative nature of printing sites with regard to production in Latin or in the vernacular carries over specifically to the production of religious books, for which more and less positive and receptive markets could already be distinguished in the early years of printing.

It is difficult to create clear lines of demarcation when dealing with religious literature in the vernacular, religious texts with entertaining elements and abridgments of theological texts for the use of parish priests. Consequently, the total amount of religious literature within the incunabula production cannot be determined beyond doubt. These texts were produced and printed in all of the towns in the Middle Low German region, in each case constituting a different percentage of the entire print production, due to both the requirements of the local book market and the areas of specialization of the various printing presses.[75]

[75] Due to the much more complicated cataloguing situation for printed documents produced after 1500, the following chapter mainly deals with numbers from before 1500 and, where possible, provides an overview for the years 1500–1517.

Looking at the entire Middle Low German region, the conclusion reached in earlier research that religious texts made up the majority of printed documents in the vernacular has to be somewhat nuanced. The overall incunabula production in Middle Low German included 40 percent religious and religious-political texts, 30 percent grammatical and rhetorical school books,[76] 11 percent calendars and other pragmatic texts, 9 percent political communications and regulations, with only 3 percent historiographical and 3 percent epic texts.[77] Another 3–4 percent were texts of an entirely anti-Jewish character. None of these numbers should be seen as reflecting actual production. They only record what, from the actual production, remains accounted for. As such, the number of texts that were not kept within clerical libraries—especially broadsheets and political communications—must have been much higher. A more realistic estimate for the medieval period is not, however, possible.

After 1500, the production of texts dealing with current events particularly increased due to Emperor Maximilian I's conscious use of the print medium for political propaganda, on the one hand, and, as mentioned above, the Reuchlin case in Cologne, on the other hand. The latter led to the production of a huge number of anti-Jewish texts inside and outside Cologne.

Stendal, where in 1488–89 Joachim Westphal was responsible for a small but distinct print production, is an exception, with Jean Gerson's *Donatus moralisatus* being the only religious work printed. It was printed in Latin, while the works printed in the vernacular were entirely pragmatic, juridical or entertaining in content.[78] In all other towns, religious books were an important factor in book production in the vernacular, something that becomes obvious when different literary genres are compared.

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[76] 88 of about 300 incunabula in Middle Low German can be classified as pedagogical books or school and university curricula, particularly grammar and rhetoric like the *Vocabularius ex quo* and the *Lilium grammaticae*. The majority of these texts were produced in Cologne, and to a lesser degree also in Lübeck.

[77] Twenty-six texts were of contemporary political and public interest such as acclamations and coinage regulations—the actual number of these might have been much higher. In each town, a consistent number of pragmatic texts were produced additionally; for example, calendars, almanacs and prognostica (thirty-five in all).

[78] Losbuch [Low German]. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1489]. BC 152, GW M18775. Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolphi [Low German]. Stendal: Joachim Westphal, 1489. BC 148, GW 12788. Bruder Rausch [Low German] Broder Rusche. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1488]. BC 138, GW 12745. Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon (1489?) [Low German]. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1488–89]. BC 153, GW M50715.

More than one hundred incunabula can be labeled as religious texts, with substantial differences in the quantity of the various textual genres being produced. There were three full Bible translations and eleven plenaries and Psalters produced before 1500, with ten more being produced in the years prior to 1517. Another dominant genre was the prayer book (thirty-three), both prayer books in general and those especially for the Virgin Mary, such as Rosaries. Twenty-three Passions were printed, with a primary focus on those of St. Katharina and St. Barbara, and in Cologne, St. Ursula and the eleven thousand Virgins.

All these texts seem to be reprints, abridgments, compilations and combinations of the same materials and topics over and over again. This trend continues in the area of other hagiographic texts such as legends; for example, the legend of Arnt Buschmann is printed four times,[79] one about the Holy Three Kings three times, Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* seven times before 1500, and four more times by 1517. The revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden were also released in three Middle Low German editions before 1500.

The production of religious texts in the vernacular remained important after 1500, but the area of specialization changed in some towns. Before 1500, Lübeck was the center for religious print production in the vernacular, especially of prayer books, anonymous compilations and catechisms. After 1500, the printers Stephan Arndes and Georg Richolff produced fewer compilations and prayer books, but more plenaries and Gospels with glossae. A similar shift in production can be detected in Magdeburg, where many small religious texts by anonymous authors were printed before 1500: explanations of the Decalogue and the Pater Noster, Rosaries and other prayer books, Sorrows of the Virgin Mary and anonymously compiled manuals for confession. The printers Simon Koch and Moritz Brandis left Magdeburg around 1503 or 1504 and, in the years thereafter until 1513, the only Magdeburg printer, Jakob Winter, produced only two texts in the vernacular, a Gospel and a text about the miracle of the bleeding host in Wilsnack in Brandenburg.

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[79] *Arnt Buschmans mirakel* is known in manuscript form as early as 1444 and 1446, with the first Latin translation also being produced in 1444. Three Dutch incunabula precede the Middle Low German early imprints. Up to 1520, eleven versions were produced in different dialects, with the text disappearing from lists of printed books produced after 1520. Seelmann, Wilhelm, ed. "Buschmans Mirakel: Ein religiöses Volksbuch des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts; neuer Abdruck mit einer Einleitung." *Nd. Jb.* 6 (1880).

The situation was quite different in Cologne, where until 1500 almost no smaller anonymous religious texts had been produced; instead, the print production in the vernacular basically consisted of the works of well-known authors, Scripture and authoritative texts: the two full translations of the Bible, Gerardus de Vliederhoven, Dietrich Coelde van Munster, Jean Gerson and the *Kleine Seelentrost*, a collection of exempla that had already been translated and widely diffused in manuscript form. After 1500, however, the production of hagiographic texts, smaller texts of moral didactics and those with references to the pilgrimage sites, indulgences and churches in Cologne, increased. It seems likely that the Cologne printers only gradually turned their attention to a public that would buy even non-authoritative religious texts and smaller books. The printers in Magdeburg and Lübeck, on the other hand, had from the beginning relied on a large and affluent public outside of clerical and academic circles and had produced and sold numerous anonymous texts in the vernacular rather than relying on authoritative names and the Scripture.

The conclusions to be drawn from this quantitative analysis of print production in the different towns are vague because of the aforementioned lack of clarity about books as goods for long-distance trade and the extent of surviving incunabula. The assignment of certain texts to certain groups of readers also remains vague, since it is not a given that academic readers would not also buy a popular explanation of the Decalogue, for example. However, some conclusions are possible: Cologne is different from all the other printing towns in terms of the amount and type of religious literature produced in the vernacular, since the printers basically relied on well-known authors and avoided the otherwise popular anonymous compilations. The university, the proximity to the Low Countries and the political structure of the town with a relatively old and stable political ruling elite are all aspects of this, but fail to provide a specific explanation.

In Lübeck and Magdeburg, on the other hand, there seems to have been more far-reaching production of texts for an urban, lay public from the outset: the printers dared to produce both anonymous religious texts and texts presenting a combination of religious, philosophic and political issues—*Reynke de Vos, Dat Narrenschyp, Dodes Dantz* and *Ulenspiegel*. These books stand out because of their originality and their artistic value, but count for only a very small percentage of the general production of these printing presses, which mainly produced prayer books and compilations.

It is clear that almost no texts produced in Middle Low German were subsequently translated into other German languages. The relationship between translations from High German, Dutch or Latin into Middle Low German and incunabula originally produced in Middle Low German is another question that will be examined more closely in the case of more narrowly defined religious didactical texts such as catechetical and confessional books, Books of Mirror, Ars moriendi and treatises. Since these contain the most striking concepts of the social order, the question of whether they were translations, adaptations or texts formulated exclusively for the region they were read in is important in terms of the homogeneity within a cultural space.

I.3 *Different Discourses: Modes of Distinction*

In modern studies of metaphors, the definition of the discourse is often formulated by the researcher based on knowledge that lies outside of the texts themselves. The biography of an author, the claim of a newspaper about closeness to a political party or the position of a text within a controversy are factors that help to define the discourses and to explain the use of metaphors within. For the Middle Low German didactical literature the case is more complex, since all discourses unfold under the patronage of and in relation to a single institution—the Church. Authors are often unknown, and their affiliation with an order or a philosophical school is almost always impossible to ascertain: for example, clearly nominalist positions are absent and obviously heretical teachings are extremely rare.[80] The claim of a text in the corpus to a conservative or progressive place in a discourse—and in the final analysis, the interpretation of a text's use of rhetorical tropes for society—can only be ascertained by relying on certain clues and guidelines and, in any case, all religious didactical literature is mainly conservative in nature. There are, however, slight differences regarding the importance of the priest for salvation, the acknowledgment of the importance of the local nobility, the focus on certain social groups or the importance of anti-feminism, for example. These can be

[80] One exception: Dat bokeken van deme repe (Provázek třípramenný), niederdeutsch. Daran: De uthlegghinge ouer den louen (Výklad víry), niederdeutsch. Transl. Johannes von Lübeck. [Lübeck: Drucker des Calderinus, um 1481]. BC 51, GW no367. The text has been identified as a translation of a text by Jan Hus, but was printed without identifying author and context, and for a long time attributed to an unknown Rostock Franciscan.

distinguished on the basis of the textual traditions of the early printed documents, a fairly unique situation in the Middle Low German region. The corpus of Middle Low German lay didactical texts comprises, roughly speaking, three different types of texts, each of them connected to a certain discourse and supporting a certain group.

The ideological tendency of many of the texts conforms to the group of "translated bestsellers" or "anonymous compilations" of which they are part. The modes of production of translated bestsellers—texts that were adapted for a Middle Low German printed version, usually from Dutch versions[81] of either a manuscript or, more often, an earlier printed document—were similar, as were their authors and sponsors: most of them were written by clerics who were explicitly identified and were addressed to a local nobleman. These texts were generally more popular in the Low Countries or in the Upper German regions than in the Middle Low German region. This applies to Dietrich Coelde van Munster's *Kerstenspiegel*, Johannes of Paltz' *Hemmelsche funtgrove, Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis, *De veer utersten* by Gerardus de Vliederhoven and *Summa confessorum* by Berthold of Regensburg. As they are clearly attributed to clerical authors, none of whom were known for radical theses about the social order, the role of the Church or other possibly deviant positions, these texts can safely be classified as belonging to a conservative and hierarchical clerical lay didactic discourse—this does not mean, however, that they were loyal to all parts of the clergy. And they were intended for different publics: some of them (*Summa confessorum, Hemmelsche funtgrove*) mention a nobleman as addressee and sponsor of the book. *Summa confessorum* was a conscious rework of a clerical guidebook for lay use—in this case, noble lay use.[82] Other texts, such as the *Imitatio Christi*, were originally written specifically for clerical readers, with the guidelines for monastic life later being taken as guidelines for laypeople's lives as well. Adaptations, in these cases mainly from other German incunabula,

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[81] The close connection between the Middle Low German and the Dutch region has also been noted in the case of sermons, which also usually lack a specific model text, instead consisting of translated and compiled fragments of other texts. Schiewer, Regina. "Die Entdeckung der mittelniederdeutschen Predigt: Überlieferung, Form, Inhalte." *Oxford German Studies* 26 (1997).

[82] Hamm, Marlies. "Die Entstehungsgeschichte der 'Rechtssumme' des Dominikaners Bertold. Ihr Verhältnis zur 'Summa confessorum' des Johannes von Freiburg und zu deren lateinischen Bearbeitungen." In *Die "Rechtssumme" Bruder Bertholds: Eine deutsche abecedarische Bearbeitung der "Summa confessorum" des Johannes von Freiburg*. Ed. by Marlies Hamm et al., 35–114. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980, ibid., 55.

include *Spiegel der menschen*, a series of catechetical works that serve to explain the Decalogue and the Pater Noster, the *Sieben Todsünden, Sermo de matrimonio, Epistola de gubernatione de rei familiaris*, and *Schakspel to dude*. Along with most High German print production, they are derived from either a manuscript or an original Latin printed bestseller, and thus are part of an older tradition.

In this category of translated bestsellers, we find a number of texts that exclusively address a monastic audience, and as such represent a distinct clerical and monastic ideology. They also have the closest connection to a learned discourse, in Latin, from authoritative theological model texts.

A mixture of learned discourse and other discourses, especially a specific lay didactical discourse, is represented by the anonymous collections for which no manuscript or print model is known, and which is particularly characteristic of print production in Lübeck and Braunschweig: *Speygel der dogede, Speygel der leyen, Licht der Seelen/Iegher, Bedroffenisse Marien, Claghe vnde droffenisse der verdomeden sele, Spegel aller lefhebberen der werlde, Ynkere to gode, Doernenkrantz van Collen, Spegel der sammitticheit*. These texts either bore no dedication or were dedicated to everyone or to the simple folk (except for *Ynkere to gode*, which deals with male monastic life). They have no identified author and cannot be assigned a certain reading public. It is unlikely but not impossible that they are the work of lay authors or compilators. It is very likely that the printed versions of the texts were collectively compiled, translated and abridged. As opposed to adaptations from older model texts, which usually encompass both clerical and noble ideologemes, some of the catechetical texts and explanations of the Decalogue and the Pater Noster were part of this discourse, a discourse that allowed for a less conservative ideology and provided more frequent opportunities to criticize clerics—if not the Church in general—and, in particular, allowed for a reconsideration of the role of the nobility. Nonetheless, all of these texts remain tightly bound up with the Church's framework, the importance of sacraments and the priests for confession and the general need to be obedient and to work. If there are "anti-clerical" tendencies visible in the texts of this category, they usually aim at a redefinition of the boundary between clergy and laity, not by concretely criticizing the clergy but rather by diminishing the factors making up their privileges.

The most progressive texts, as such a third type of discourse, are made up of the anonymous texts that still bear the characteristics of *Erbauungsliteratur*, but have fewer catechetical elements and are far away from the learned discourse. In contrast to the aforementioned texts, the didactical

character is concealed in a narrative rather than being presented plainly. *Dodes Dantz, Henselyns bok*, and *Boek van veleme rade* are works of this nature. They include the greatest amount of criticism against the clergy and the most distinct ideology supporting the well-off burghers. All of them are Middle Low German originals. These are possibly the works of lay authors (a fact, in the case of the *Boek van veleme rade*), since no great knowledge of scholastic texts and theological debates was necessary.

"Translated bestsellers"

The most important translated bestseller was of course the Bible itself. The four pre-Reformation complete Middle Low German translations[83] and partial translations, such as Psalters and plenaria,[84] accounted for the bulk of print production in the region, satisfying the enormous lay demand for the Bible.[85] The boundaries between Scripture for clerical use and lay reading were not clear: for example, the six plenaria printed in Lübeck before the Reformation contain several passages which also occur in the anonymous compilation *Speygel der Leyen*, in the *Dodes Dantz* and in the Middle Low German *Revelations* of St. Birgitta.[86] At the same time, translations of the Bible are difficult to include in any study on devotional literature in general: first, because their chances of surviving until modern times were much higher than those of other devotional literature, not to mention pragmatic literature, so the fact that we know that a large number of Bibles appeared on the market does not mean that Bibles were actually the most commonly printed and read books;[87] second, Bible translation had a textual tradition of several centuries in the Middle Low German

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[83] Ising, Gerhard, ed. *Die niederdeutschen Bibelfrühdrucke: Kölner Bibeln (um 1478), Lübecker Bibel (1494), Halberstädter Bibel (1522).* Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1961–1967.

[84] Schröder, Ingrid. "Qvatuor Evangeliorum versio Saxonica: Ein Exempel mittelniederdeutscher Bibelübersetzung aus dem 15. Jahrhundert." *Nd. Jb.* 115 (1992); Schreiner, Klaus. "Der Psalter. Theologische Symbolik, frommer Gebrauch und lebensweltliche Pragmatik einer heiligen Schrift in Kirche und Gesellschaft des Mittelalters." In *Metamorphosen der Bibel.* Ed. by Ralf Plate and Michael Embach, 9–45. Bern: Lang, 2004; Katara, Pekka, ed. *Ein mittelniederdeutsches Plenar: aus dem Kodex Msc. G.K.S. 94 Fol. der Großen Kgl. Bibliothek zu Kopenhagen.* Helsinki: Finnische Literaturgesellschaft, 1932.

[85] Gow, "Challenging the Protestant Paradigm," 187.

[86] Kämpfer, Winfried. *Studien zu den gedruckten mittelniederdeutschen Plenarien: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte spätmittelalterlicher Erbauungsliteratur*. Münster: Böhlau, 1954, 170ff.

[87] Neddermeyer, Uwe. *Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch: Schriftlichkeit und Leseinteresse im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: quantitative und qualitative Aspekte.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998, 76.

region, and thus was based on entirely different principles than was the case for other translations;[88] and third, not only the text of the Scripture itself, but also the glossae and paraphrases were part of a long history of reading and listening practices that bore no comparison to the reading of other, less commonly used and less customary texts.[89] This does not mean that the Scriptures can be removed from the project of lay didactical literature entirely—quite the opposite: the Bible and the textual traditions surrounding it—translation, exegesis, glossae, paraphrases—are the basis for most of the other texts and compilations which were often used alongside the text of the Scriptures itself or texts by the Church Fathers. The most important model text for lay didactical literature, the Bible, was not a fixed text, but was rather the basis for a free-ranging and ever-growing body of references.[90] Furthermore, Middle Low German Bible translations are the only examples from the sample for which a direct translation from a Latin model is likely. In the case of the four complete translations, at least some parts were translated independently in each of them. For other parts, the entire New Testament, for example, the model was the original Cologne translation, which was made from the Vulgata and the only example of a direct Latin-Middle Low German translation.

Bestsellers in the Middle Low German print production indicate the close connection between the region and the Low Countries since the editors usually chose a Dutch text as the model for their editions rather than a Latin or High German version. Whether these texts in their original form can be characterized as lay didactical texts is open to question, since the authors usually wrote only a part of their entire output in the vernacular, and then returned their focus to a learned public—or texts produced for

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[88] Walther, Wilhelm. *Die deutsche Bibelübersetzung des Mittelalters*. Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1966 [1889–1892]; Schwencke, Olaf. *Die Glossierung alttestamentlicher Bücher in der Lübecker Bibel von 1494: Beiträge zur Frömmigkeitsgeschichte des Spätmittelalters und zur Verfasserfrage vorlutherischer Bibeln*. Berlin: Schmidt, 1967.

[89] Reinitzer, Heimo, ed. *Biblia deutsch: Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition*. Wittig, 1983; Hahn, Anna K. " 'Die ebreyschen sprechen dorobir'. Die 'Postilla' des Nikolaus von Lyra in der Historienbibel Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, mgf 1277." In Plate/Embach, eds. *Metamorphosen der Bibel*, 247–264; Murdoch, Brian. *The medieval popular Bible: Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003.

[90] To which extent the Bible translations and, above all, the popular Bible paraphrases which were spread in Middle Low German manuscripts, were used as text models for prints has not been investigated at all. As examples for Middle Low German Bible paraphrases see Liljebäck, Erik N., ed. *Die Loccumer Historienbibel: (die sog. Loccumer Erzählungen); eine mittelniederdeutsche Bibelparaphrase aus der Mitte des XV. Jhs*. Lund: Ohlsson, 1923; Andersson-Schmitt, Margarete, ed. *Die Lübecker Historienbibel: Die niederdeutsche Version der nordniederländischen Historienbibel*. Köln: Böhlau, 1995.

a learned public were translated and potentially adopted for lay use by someone other than the original author. Those authors who wrote in the context of the *Devotio moderna* did not target the laity as their reading or listening public in general, but their own specific community,[91] even though these texts could then play a larger role as didactical texts; for example, the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis. It has been referred to as the most widely diffused book besides the Bible during the Middle Ages,[92] and even in the Middle Low German region its distribution was considerable. It was printed in Lübeck in 1489, 1492 and 1496, and in Magdeburg in 1501 (twice).[93] Book I was modeled on a High German version, while Book IV had a Dutch model text. Books II and III were printed separately in the incunabula *Van dem koninklikeme weghe des crutzes cristi*, Lübeck 1495, and *Bedroffenisse Marien*, Lübeck 1498, with the editor choosing to rewrite a Dutch model text in Middle Low German rather than translate it.[94] In contrast to most other incunabula, the *Imitatio* was already known in manuscript form in Lübeck, where the Beguines' convent owned one exemplar, which had probably come from Hildesheim. This manuscript corresponds with the Lübeck printed versions of the *Imitatio* in several chapters that rely on a lost model text, identified by the editor of the manuscripts, Paul Hagen, as the work of a different translator. The actual relationship between manuscript tradition and printed Middle Low German versions of the *Imitatio Christi* has not, however, been resolved.[95]

This is an example of an original Latin text being translated into a variety of vernaculars, with the Middle Low German editors choosing the Dutch model for their editions, in most cases. The same thing happened with the originally anonymous Latin *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum*, now ascribed to Gerardus de Vliederhoven. Seventy-three incunabula editions

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[91] Burger, Christoph. "Direkte Zuwendung zu den 'Laien' und Rückgriff auf Vermittler in spätmittelalterlicher katechetischer Literatur." In *Spätmittelalterliche Frömmigkeit zwischen Ideal und Praxis*. Ed. by Berndt Hamm, 85–110. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, ibid., 96.

[92] See an overview of the production and distribution of the text in Neddermeyer, Uwe. " 'Radix Studii et Speculum Vitae'. Verbreitung und Rezeption der 'Imitatio Christi' in Handschriften und Drucken bis zur Reformation." In *Studien zum 15. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Erich Meuthen*. Ed. by Johannes Helmrath and Erich Meuthen, 457–481. München: Oldenbourg, 1994.

[93] See appendix under *Imitatio Christi*.

[94] Bauer, Erika, and Burghart Wachinger. "Thomas Hemerken von Kempen C & D." *VerfLex* IX, 871–882, ibid., 877–878.

[95] Hagen, Paul, ed. *Zwei Urschriften der "Imitatio Christi" in mittelniederdeutschen Übersetzungen.* Berlin: Weidmann, 1930, xx–xxi.

are known, of which more than forty were written in Latin, ten in Dutch and the rest in various other vernaculars. The Middle Low German editions from Cologne in 1476 and 1487 were based on the Dutch translations. While there were six independent branches of translation into High German, the two later editions from Magdeburg and Hamburg were based on the sole Cologne translation, which had also been transcribed as a manuscript. The Magdeburg edition contained, along with the translation of the *Cordiale*, an explanation of the Decalogue by Swabian Hans Müntzinger.[96] The latter was also printed independently in Magdeburg,[97] indicating Magdeburg printer Simon Koch's overall preference for adapting texts from Augsburg in contrast to most of his colleagues.

For the Middle Low German editions of the works of Dietrich Coelde van Munster, the printers also relied on Dutch models. The text most frequently printed and most often researched is the *Kerstenspiegel* or *Spegel des cristene mynschen*. The editor of the text, Clemens Drees, assumes the author to have been personally involved in the preparation of the first printed edition from Cologne, which itself showed characteristics of a translated text.[98] *Kerstenspiegel* starts with a catechism that includes the Credo, the Decalogue, the Deadly Sins, the Works of Mercy, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Beatitudes. The numerous editions of the text in Middle Low German made it one of the most widely available catechisms. It was sometimes printed together with Dietrich's *Büchlein innerlicher Übungen*, and at other times with his *Testament eynes waren christen mynschen*, the latter also being distributed separately.[99] The author had originally written partly in Dutch and partly in Westphalian, but for all the later printed versions, the Dutch version produced in Leuven in 1480 served as a model. Six of the complete versions were printed in Cologne before 1500, with four more printed prior to the Reformation, again showing the preference the Cologne printers had for safe bets when it came to religious books in the vernacular. In Lübeck there were two full editions of the *Kerstenspiegel* representing, together with the Rostock exemplars, a different tradition of the text. There were also two printed versions of both the *Kerstenspiegel* and the *Testament* produced in Rostock in 1507

[96] See appendix under *Cordiale*.

[97] See appendix under *Katechismus*.

[98] A comprehensive list of the known printed editions and the single manuscript of the *Christenspiegel* is available in Drees, Clemens, ed. *Der Christenspiegel des Dietrich Kolde von Münster.* Werl: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1954, 40–42.

[99] See appendix under *Ars moriendi*.

and in 1510.[100] A text with the same title can be found as an appendix to a prayer collection, the so-called *St. Annenbüchlein*, produced in Braunschweig in 1507.[101]

These thirteen Middle Low German printed versions of the *Kerstenspiegel* were all based on the Dutch text. Dietrich's work had first been successful in the Low Countries, and only thereafter in the Middle Low German region, whereas there were no printed versions ever produced in the other German lands. The close connection between the Low Countries and the Middle Low German region is not only apparent from these printed books; the manuscript tradition also shows a lively cultural and literary exchange via the Hanseatic League, with the towns with Hanseatic trading offices (Lübeck, Bruges) serving as its centers, an exchange that went in both directions, since not only did Dutch texts serve as models for printers in the Middle Low German region, but Middle Low German texts were also produced in the Low Countries.[102]

Another example of this contact is the edition of *Der Leyen Doctrinal*, now lost, which was originally written in Dutch, preserved in several manuscript versions, and subsequently translated for a Middle Low German manuscript version and a printed version produced in Magdeburg in 1507. In the same period, two High German adaptations were released, one of them by the Nuremberg Carthusian Erhard Gross which became the model for four incunabula editions,[103] one of the few examples of a text migrating from the north to the south.

The extremely popular Canon Law *Summa confessorum* was originally written in Latin and then shortened, translated and re-worked in German for lay use by Berthold of Regensburg. A version based on the Early High German model was printed three times in Middle Low German.[104] This text has been used as material for a study on the language barriers between the north and the south, with the migration of the text from the south to the north being apparent in the various manuscript and print versions.[105]

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[100] See appendix under *Kerstenspiegel*.

[101] See appendix under *St. Annenbüchlein*.

[102] Leloux, *Mittelniederdeutsche Frühdrucke*, 30–31.

[103] Ljunggren, Gunilla, ed. *Der Leyen Doctrinal. Eine mittelniederdeutsche Übersetzung des mittelniederländischen Lehrgedichts Dietsche Doctrinale*. Lund: Gleerup, 24–28. See also appendix under *Doctrinale*.

[104] See appendix under *Summa*.

[105] Dittmann, Gerhard. "Stemma und Wortgeographie: Beobachtungen zur Umsetzung der oberdeutschen 'Rechtssumme' Bruder Bertholds ins Niederdeutsche." In Hamm et al., eds. *Die "Rechtssumme" Bruder Bertholds*, 115–141, ibid., 139.

Johannes of Paltz (OESA) studied in Erfurt and lived in the Augustine monastery there; his Latin texts were highly popular, but only one of his texts was used for Middle Low German print. His two major Latin works, *Coelifodina* and *Supplementum Coelifodina*, were longer, Latinized versions of his German bestseller, the *Himmlische Fundgrube*. The later Latin version of this cycle of sermons is known in the form of four print editions produced in Leipzig between 1502 and 1511,[106] while twenty editions of the older German version were printed, of which sixteen were produced in the years 1490 to 1507. The *Himmlische Fundgrube* is a text abridged from four sermons that the author himself has called a *tractatus*.[107] The text was probably originally written in the Middle German dialect used in and around Erfurt. There was, however, only one Middle Low German printed edition produced, *Hemmelsche funtgrove*, in Magdeburg in 1490.[108] This Middle Low German text is a translation and adaptation of the Early High German version produced by Conrad Kachelofen in Leipzig in 1491.[109]

The lack of texts by the theologians Jean Gerson and Nicolaus of Cusa, who are considered among the most important and influential of the fifteenth century, is surprising. Again, this might be largely explained by the lack of further research into the model texts of Middle Low German printed documents and, in any case, only very few of these were published under an author's name. Of Jean Gerson's extant works, the *Ars moriendi* from the *Opus tripartitum* was the text most often adopted for German print versions.[110] Those that circulated in High German were the adaptation by Geiler von Kaisersberg and the translation of the *Opus tripartitum*, or parts of it, by Gabriel Biel, one of which was printed in Cologne in Middle Low German but is only preserved in fragments in the Rostock University Library.[111] In the Middle Low German region, there were numerous

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[106] Burger, Christoph, and Friedhelm Stasch. "Einleitung." In *Johannes von Paltz, Opera omnia vol. 1: Coelifodina*. Ed. by Christoph Burger, IX–LIII. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983, ibid., IX–XIV.

[107] Hamm, Berndt. *Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis.* Tübingen: Mohr, 1982, 110–115.

[108] Die himmlische Fundgrube [Low German] De hemmelsche funtgrove. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, not before 1490]. BC 166, GW M14464. See also appendix under *Hemmelsche funtgrove*.

[109] Laubner, Horst, and Wolfgang Urban. "Einleitung zur Edition der Himmlischen Fundgrube." In *Johannes von Paltz, Opera omnia vol. 3: Opuscula*. Ed. by Christoph Burger. 157–200. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989, ibid., 196.

[110] On the specific program for catechesis in Jean Gerson's work, see Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 13–20.

[111] See appendix under *Ars moriendi*.

Ars moriendi texts, but none of them were published under Jean Gerson's name, and any potential connection to the *Opus tripartitum* has not been investigated closely enough.[112] A free Middle Low German adaptation of the *Ars moriendi* was printed under the title *De ghuldene Seelentrost* in 1489 in Lübeck and in Magdeburg in 1491.[113] It was also published as an appendix to the Lübeck incunabulum *Speygel der Leyen* in 1496.

There is only one example of the diffusion of a Vienna School text in the Middle Low German region: *Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes*, attributed to Thomas Peuntner, a translation of Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl's *De dilectione Dei*. It is preserved in two different manuscript versions and in four High German and one Low German print editions, the latter released by Stephan Arndes.[114]

While all these books included texts by more or less contemporary theologians, the emphasis on the Passion of Christ turned out to be a topic suitable for the adaptation of much older texts. Anselm of Canterbury's *Dialogus Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini*, written in the eleventh century, received increased attention in the Late Middle Ages through a German translation and a Middle Low German verse version, the latter written in the thirteenth century and attributed to St. Anselm[115]—surprisingly, only one Latin print edition, two print editions of the High German translation and three editions of the Middle Low German verse version were produced before 1500.[116]

Two last examples from the margins of *Erbauungsliteratur* effectively prove the comparatively low level of the production of well-known texts in the region in comparison to the southern German centers: *Lucidarius*, already known in the Middle Low German region from a thirteenth-century adaptation,[117] was printed in Lübeck in a single edition,[118] while there were twenty-five incunabula editions of it in High German and several others in other vernaculars, as well as forty-four editions printed in the

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[112] Kraume, Herbert. *Die Gerson-Übersetzungen Geilers von Kaysersberg: Studien zur deutschsprachigen Gerson-Rezeption.* München: Artemis-Verl., 1980, deals only with High German texts.

[113] See appendix under *Seelentrost*.

[114] See appendix under *Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes*.

[115] Novikoff, Alex J. "Anselm, Dialogue, and the Rise of Scholastic Disputation." *Speculum* 86, no. 2 (2011): 406.

[116] See appendix under *Dialogus*.

[117] The manuscript tradition in Heidlauf, Felix, ed. *Lucidarius: aus der Berliner Handschrift.* Berlin: Weidmann, 1915.

[118] Lucidarius [Low German]. Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, 1485. BC 85, GW M09355.

sixteenth century.[119] Similarly, there were only two Middle Low German adaptations of the extremely popular German adaptation of *Aesopus moralisatus*, both printed in Magdeburg in 1492. This collection of animal fables was otherwise extremely popular in print and in translation.[120] The *Magdeburger Prosa-Äsop* combines translations of the well-known fables with original moral commentaries. Other texts with the same combination of religious, philosophic and political content have no known models from other languages.

The "translated bestsellers" dominated print production in the Early High and High German vernaculars in the fifteenth century, and consequently they also dominate modern scholarly research about the period. In the Middle Low German region, however, they make up only a small part of the production of edifying literature. It is striking that most of the titles that dominated the market in the other German regions do not appear in the category of translated bestsellers: for example, the texts of the Vienna School, Marquard of Lindau, Hans Folz and Hans Müntzinger were either not printed in Middle Low German editions or were published anonymously and are difficult to identify and assign to the original authors. This depersonalization is also visible among Middle Low German originals, which never mention a contemporary author, instead ascribing them to a Church Father.

Translated Bestsellers II: Adaptations and Reprints from Other German incunabula

While no model in another language or in manuscript form is known for most catechetical texts, Magdeburg printer Simon Koch used a text from Augsburg as a model for his two catechisms: *Dat Pater Noster mit der Glosse* is a close adaptation of the explanation of the Decalogue by the Swabian lecturer Hans Müntzinger, printed by Anton Sorg in Augsburg in 1484 and in two other undated editions. The explanation of the Credo produced in Magdeburg in 1493 also follows a 1485 Augsburg edition.[121] The explanation of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Virtues from 1490

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[119] Sick, Monika. *Der "Lucidarius" und das "Buch Sidrach": eine wissenssoziologische Untersuchung zweier mittelalterlicher Wissensbücher*. Bonn, Univ. Diss., 1995, 24.

[120] Derendorf, Brigitte, ed. *Der Magdeburger Prosa-Äsop: Eine mittelniederdeutsche Bearbeitung von Heinrich Steinhöwels 'Esopus' und Niklas von Wyles 'Guiscard und Sigismunda'; Text und Untersuchungen.* Köln: Böhlau, 1996, 49ff. See appendix under *Aesop*.

[121] See appendix under *Katechismus*.

had two documents printed by Johan Bämler in Augsburg as its model.[122] The book entitled *Hir na volget eyn schone geystlike lere unde underwisinge van den souden dotsunden* not only follows the Augsburg document very closely in its translation, but also uses the former's graphic scheme, copying the woodcuts very closely. Only the introduction and chapter titles differ significantly from the Augsburg edition. In the chapters themselves, there are only minor differences from the High German text—which itself used a manuscript model text.[123]

Menschenspiegel, printed in Cologne in 1485, is modeled on two editions printed in Augsburg, circa 1472 and 1476. The printer Johan Bämler was also the compiler.[124] The High German text is a translation of the Pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum peccatoris*, with the addition of Freidank sayings and *Von menschlicher Hinfälligkeit*.[125] The Middle Low German version closely follows the Augsburg compilation.

Eyn seer vruchtbars boexken genant Mygrale, a version of the Latin original *Preparamentum saluberrimu[m] christiani homi[ni]s ad mortem se disponentis* by Guilelmus Textor/Wilhelm Zewers was printed in Cologne in 1502.[126] The original translator was Ludwig Moser of Basel—if there was any other stage of translation between Moser's High German and the Middle Low German, it remains unknown.[127]

One of the few examples of a treatise by a contemporary author is that of Augustinian Andreas Proles about the baptism of children, which was written in Middle German and printed almost simultaneously in Leipzig by Martin Landsberg and in a Middle Low German version by Simon Koch in Magdeburg.[128] Andreas Proles' works are also a good example of the process of selection when dealing with contemporary authors: his works on reform and observance, as well as his contributions regarding female monasticism based on the model text of *De reformatione religiosorum* by the Dominican Johannes Nider, and his Middle Low German sermons were

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[122] See appendix under *De seven dotsunden*.

[123] Harris, Nigel. "Der Etymachie—Traktat in der Handschrift 2° Cod. 160 der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg." In *Etymachie-Traktat: Ein Todsündentraktat in der katechetisch-erbaulichen Sammelhandschrift; Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2 Cod. 160*. Ed. by Nigel Harris, 23–48. München: Ed. Lengenfelder, 1995.

[124] See appendix under *Menschenspiegel*.

[125] Roth, Gunhild. "Spiegel der Menschen." *VerfLex* IX, 118–119.

[126] Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1503. BC 378, VD16 Z 399.

[127] Sexauer, Wolfram D. *Frühneuhochdeutsche Schriften in Kartäuserbibliotheken: Untersuchungen zur Pflege der volkssprachlichen Literatur in Karthäuserklöstern des oberdeutschen Raums bis zum Einsetzen der Reformation.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1978, 140.

[128] See appendix under *Lehre von der Kindertaufe.*

never printed,[129] probably a reflection of a general disinterest in printing texts on monastic reform and on monastic life in general. Additionally, Johannes Nider's catechetical texts were not translated and printed in the Middle Low German region, while his guidebooks for priests, such as the *Manuale confessorum*, his *Expositio decalogi* and his *Sermones* were printed numerous times in Cologne, always in Latin. His German work *Die vierundzwanzig goldenen Harfen* circulated only in the south, being printed in Augsburg, Ulm and Strasbourg.

The limited number of treatises on matrimony is particularly striking, as is the comparatively small number of treatises among Middle Low German incunabula overall.[130] The popular texts in this genre by Albrecht von Eyb, Marcus von Weida and other authors from south of the language boundary were not translated. The two surviving Middle Low German treatises on marriage—the pseudo-Aristotelian *Sermo de matrimonio*[131] and the *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris*, ascribed to Bernhard of Clairvaux—were based on other German translation traditions rather than on the Latin originals. The *Sermo* had been diffused in three different forms: there were three Latin manuscripts before the Bavarian *Fürstenspiegel* edition and its abundant manuscript tradition, followed by the independent print tradition.[132] The print tradition started with an Augsburg edition in 1472 and continued, again being produced by Johan Bämler, in 1476. Both editions included the *Sermo* in a collection of catechetical texts. One independent edition was prepared by Christmann Heyny in Augsburg in 1481.[133] Even though it is said to represent an independent branch, the Middle Low German edition for the most part adheres very closely to the text in

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[129] A list of Andreas Proles' works, both in manuscript and printed form, in Weinbrenner, Ralph. *Klosterreform im 15. Jahrhundert zwischen Ideal und Praxis: Der Augustinereremit Andreas Proles (1429–1503) und die privilegierte Observanz.* Tübingen: Mohr, 1996, 136–140.

[130] As a comparison: Kartschoke, Erika, and Walter Behrendt. *Repertorium deutschsprachiger Ehelehren der frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1996.

[131] On the manuscript tradition of the *Sermo de matrimonio*, the three incunabula in High German and the seven broadsheets printed in the years 1512–1520 see Kartschoke/Behrendt, *Repertorium*, 196–199. See also appendix under *Lehre*.

[132] Eene lere, wo sick twe Minschen in dem Sakrament der Ee holden scholen. [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca 1478]. BC 35, GW M17729. See Pensel, Franzjosef. "Verzeichnis der altdeutschen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek Dessau." *Verzeichnisse altdeutscher Handschriften in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1977, 105. Brinkhus, Gerd. *Eine bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation des 15. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen und Textausgabe.* München: Artemis-Verl., 1978, 52–54.

[133] Lehre und Predigt, wie sich zwei Menschen in dem Sakrament der heiligen Ehe halten sollen. Augsburg: Christmann Heyny, 1481. GW M17728.

the *Fürstenspiegel* and, in any case, the Middle Low German edition was based on a High German model, probably one of the Augsburg editions.

The two editions of the *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris*, both printed by Simon Koch in Magdeburg, also had a model text in High German. Cossar defines the Middle Low German version as a translation from the High German edition from Augsburg, produced by Johann Schönsperger from 1485–88.[134] The text promotes a certain ethos regarding work and the economy that generally fits very well with the specific definition of wisdom and personal success that recurs in many of the incunabula texts—this, however, did not lead to a wider circulation or greater production of this kind of treatise in the Middle Low German region.

As this list shows, there was limited interest in the north for adapting texts from the printing centers in the south. Only in Magdeburg, which lies in the transition zone between Upper and Lower German, were faithful translations of books from Augsburg produced and woodcuts copied. In this regard, the strongest relationship was that between Augsburg printer Johan Bämler and Simon Koch in Magdeburg. The other printing presses did not use southern models—this is in keeping with the general lack of cultural and textual exchange between the two large German language regions during the Middle Ages.[135] The few texts selected for print production in the north were texts by contemporary theologians and monks with name recognition that had already been popular in manuscript form. As a rule, however, the adoption and diffusion of this type of text in the form of an edifying book in the vernacular was much less common in the Middle Low German region than in the south.

Middle Low German originals: Catechisms and Mirrors

Catechetical and confessional texts have been relatively poorly researched, in spite of having been extremely popular genres.[136] As for most Middle

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[134] Cossar, Clive D. M. *The German translations of the Pseudo-Bernhardine "Epistola de cura rei familiaris."* Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 166. Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1975, 317–327.

[135] Sprandel, Rolf. "Was wußte man im späten Mittelalter in Süddeutschland über Norddeutschland und umgekehrt? Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung 1347–1517." In Paravicini/Jordan, eds., *Nord und Süd*, 219–230.

[136] The most recent study on German late medieval catechisms is Bast, *Honor your fathers*, with further references. For texts from the Upper German region see Weidenhiller, Egino. *Untersuchungen zur deutschsprachigen katechetischen Literatur des späten Mittelalters: Nach den Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek.* München: Beck, 1965. The only comparative collection of texts available is Bahlmann, Paul. *Deutschlands*

Low German printed documents that have no clear model texts, efforts to assign them to specific authors will prove fruitless.[137] They will likely prove to be collective compilations produced by printers and their aides.

In terms of systematizing a social order, they are interesting in many ways: the Fourth Commandment eventually became the underpinning for obedience to both the clerics and the worldly rulers, with the Sixth Commandment defining the lifestyles of both virgins and married people and the confessional books in general defining the relationship between clerics and laypeople and providing spiritual advice to the different social groups. In order to place these texts in their specific cultural context, it is not enough to conduct a quantitative analysis of each individual book; rather, the different texts in the compilations—as far as they can be identified—have to be analyzed separately, since many books were collections of diverse standard catechetical and confessional texts. Once again, the Middle Low German region seems to be a space of its own, since its text production differs significantly from that in the rest of the German lands.[138]

Explanations of the Decalogue and the Credo are a genre where most Middle Low German production is made up of originals, with only a few translations. In German dialects overall, there are ten independent incunabula editions containing the Decalogue and a more or less extensive explanation of the Commandments:[139] three of these are in Middle

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katholische Katechismen bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts: Mit einer Beilage. Münster: Regensberg, 1894. Focusing on explanations of the Decalogue and having been issued in several editions: Geffcken, Johannes. *Der Bildercatechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts: Und die catechetischen Hauptstücke in dieser Zeit bis auf Luther*. Leipzig: Weigel, 1855. An overview of High German texts can be found in Harmening, "Katechismusliteratur," 91–102. Consciously omitting catechisms: Perger, Mischa von. "Vorläufiges Repertorium philosophischer und theologischer Prosa-Dialoge des lateinischen Mittelalters." In *Gespräche lesen: Philosophische Dialoge im Mittelalter*. Ed. by Klaus Jacobi, 435–494. Tübingen: Narr, 1999.

137 Nybøle, *Reynke de Vos*, 261.

138 The popular and oft-printed *Ars moriendi* texts are for the most part not included here, since they either belonged to the category of translated bestsellers or did not contain anything in terms of metaphors for society or the social order in general; for example, the *Testament eines wahren Christenmenschen*. The different editions and text traditions are collected in Falk, Franz. *Die deutschen Sterbebüchlein von der ältesten Zeit des Buchdruckes bis zum Jahre 1520*. Köln: Bachem, 1890. Most of them were not relevant for the production in Middle Low German in any case; for example, Heinrich Seuse's *Horologium aeternae sapientiae*, which was only produced in High German.

139 In High German: GW 10567 (just the text of the Ten Commandments), GW 10568–10571 (text with explanations in different redactions).

Low German.[140] If all of these actually are independent text versions, this is a relatively high output compared to other literary genres available in Middle Low German. Furthermore, as most of the catechisms were small, cheap editions with no embellishments, they were unlikely to survive until the present day. The same is true for the explanations of the Credo (four independent versions in Middle Low German), the Pater Noster (two versions), and the Ave Maria (one independent version). Furthermore, similar texts are included in some of the anonymous compilations: in *Speygel der dogede, Licht der Seelen, Hortulus animae* and in the translation of Jan Hus' book, the *Bokeken van deme repe*.

Of the independent Middle Low German explanations of the Decalogue, two versions were printed, one in Cologne in 1480[141] and the other in Leipzig in 1484, the latter combining the explanation with a sermon ascribed to St. Jerome.[142] Another short explanation was circulated as a broadsheet, but is now only known in the form of an edition printed in the nineteenth century.[143] Yet another independent version of the Middle Low German Decalogue was printed in Paris in 1498: it claims St. Augustine as its source and includes the Credo, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria on six additional leaves.[144]

Besides the Decalogue, *Ene guede vermaninge ende ene tafel des kerstlyken levens*[145] includes other catechetical pieces (Deadly Sins, Beatitudes, Credo, etc.) and related prayers, as well as advice for parents about how to teach the catechism to their children. Since none of the pieces include explanations but merely present the texts in Middle Low German, sometimes accompanied by the Latin version in a parallel column, it is difficult to ascertain if there had been a concrete model text in another language.

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[140] For this and the following prints, see appendix under *Katechismus*.

[141] Printed in Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 166–174, here unidentified. Suntrup, Rudolf, Burghart Wachinger, and Nicola Zotz. "Zehn Gebote (Deutsche Erklärungen)." *VerfLex* X, 1484–1503. The authors assign the text to Die zehn Gebote [Low German]. Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet toe dude. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1480]. GW 10572.

[142] Die zehn Gebote [Low German] In dusser materien synt de teyn gebode godes vorclaret in eyneme sermone des groten lerers Heremite. [Leipzig: Marcus Brandis, about 1484]. BC 356, GW 10574.

[143] Goebel, Fritz, ed. "Die Zehn Gebote mit Erklärungen und die Glaubensartikel." *Nd. Jb.* 22 (1896).

[144] Bescryvinghe der cristliken Ghelove [Low German]. [Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, about 1498]. BC 304, GW 4182. Printed: *Nd. Jb.* 45 (1919): 35.

[145] [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1475]. BC 9, GW M44777. The text was probably printed once again in Gouda in 1478 in a Dutch adaptation. Printed in Bahlmann, *Deutschlands katholische Katechismen*, 63–75.

In the case of bilingual editions, it is likely that the translation into Middle Low German was created independently and spontaneously.

Finally, the Lübeck incunabulum *Speygel der Leyen* includes catechetical texts in the form of a master and student dialogue, but they are only a small part of the entire text, which provides explanations for the secrets of Mass, the canonical hours, the feast days and much more.[146] The editor of the incunabulum, Pekka Katara, was unable to uncover a single manuscript or printed document as a model. Even for most of the single passages, a close model is lacking or indistinguishable. A manuscript also named *Speygel der Leyen* appears in one Middle Low German and one Dutch version, but is an entirely different text from that in the Lübeck incunabulum.[147] Given the enormous possibilities for using dialogic speech for didactical purposes, or to elaborate the content of a treatise in a dialectic dialogue in general,[148] it is surprising that *Speygel der Leyen* is one of the very few examples of this text form within the corpus.

In the case of the *Speygel der Leyen*, the editor conducted a thorough search, but was unable to find a manuscript model text for the document. For the most part, equally thorough research on the Middle Low German compilations has not been carried out. Nonetheless, the general impression is simply that no model texts exist. The huge *Speygel der dogede*, consisting of four books, did not follow any known single model.[149] Book I is a compilation of unknown origins. Book II is an explanation of the Decalogue, whose model is unknown. Book III is a hybrid of the *Scola celestis exercitii*,[150] based on a manuscript in a monastery in Emden and the pseudo-Augustinian *Speculum peccatoris*. This combination of texts was already known in the manuscript tradition in both Latin and Middle Low German, but not in other German dialects. All of the manuscript editions

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[146] Spiegel der Laien [Low German] Speygel der Leyen. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1496. BC 269, GW M43087. Printed: Katara, Pekka, ed. *Speygel der Leyen: Neuausgabe eines Lübecker Mohnkopfdruckes aus dem Jahre 1496*. Helsinki: Finn. Literaturges., 1952.

[147] Roolfs, Friedel, ed. *Der "Spieghel der leyen": Eine spätmittelalterliche Einführung in die Theologie der Sünde und des Leidens. Diplomatische Edition und philologische Untersuchung.* Köln: Böhlau, 2004.

[148] Dee, Stefan. " 'und wie du bist / so redestu': Zu Form und Funktion der Gesprächsszenen im 'Simplicissimus Teutsch'." *Simpliciana* 17 (1995): 27.

[149] Spiegel der Tugenden [Low German] Speygel der dogede. Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, 23 Aug. 1485. BC 87, GW M43114.

[150] Roth, Gunhild. "Scola celestis exercitii." *VerfLex* XI, 1397–1399.

were held in monastic libraries. Book IV is the catechism, and once again has no known model.[151]

A third anonymous compilation containing detailed exegesis of the Decalogue is *Licht der Seelen*; it has largely gone unaddressed by scholarship about catechetical literature. *Licht der Seelen* is a large collection of potential interrogations for confession, following catalogues of sins and virtues, social groups, and the Decalogue and Credo.[152]

Two handbooks for confession from Magdeburg also contain the Decalogue, without an explanation, but in the form of a model confession for all potential sins against each of the Commandments and a collection of the lists to be memorized to prepare a complete confession.[153] Advice for confession is also contained in many of the numerous prayer books and collections, most extensively in the *Boek der bedroffenisse Marien*, printed in two versions each in both Magdeburg and Lübeck.[154]

The Credo in German and common questions useful for the preparation of a confession are also contained in the *Bedebok*, printed by Bartholomäus Ghotan in Lübeck in 1484.[155] The title prayer book is somewhat misleading, since the chapters are 1) a prayer issued by Pope Leo; 2) the Credo and confessional advice addressing the seven mortal sins, the sins against the holy spirit, crying sins and so on; 3) how the soul should contemplate the Passion of Christ and follow in his footsteps; 4) seven psalms with glossae; 5) prayers on the Passion of Christ; 6) Ars moriendi; 7) how to confess and the nature of a true confession; and 8) prayers. The Ars moriendi and the catechetical books are conceived of as separate books and make up a considerable amount of the entire incunabulum in contrast to the actual prayers, which contain texts for different saints and for different occasions.[156]

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[151] Roth, Gunhild. "Spiegel der Tugenden." *VerfLex* IX, 130–133.

[152] For a bibliographic description of the incunabulum see now Eisermann, Falk. "Essen, Trinken, Saitenspiel und Sünden. Zum Licht der Seele (Lübeck: Bartholomäus Ghotan, 1484)." In *Studien zur geistlichen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit.* Ed. by Volker Honemann and Nine Miedema, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013 (forthcoming).

[153] Beichtbüchlein [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Albrecht Ravenstein and Joachim Westphal, about 1483–84]. GW 3778. Beichtbüchlein [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1490]. BC 161, GW 3779.

[154] See appendix under *Bedroffenisse Marien*.

[155] Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). Lübeck: Bartholomäus Ghotan, 1484. BC 79, GW 13002. See appendix under *Katechismus*.

[156] See appendix under *Gebetbuch*.

Generally, catechisms seem to be a genre that produced numerous texts without models in other languages, particularly not Latin models. This might be because they were short texts that already had a strong textual tradition, making it possible for a cleric to spontaneously provide a dogmatic explanation of the Commandments etc. without requiring a model text. On the other hand, the printing of catechisms by well-known authors who were identified to establish the text's authority was not something that happened in the Middle Low German region, and several of the popular catechisms from the Upper German regions—such as the catechisms by Nicolaus of Cusa, Jean Gerson or Stephan of Landskron—were neither adapted nor diffused in the north.

Of Passio Christi texts, which were very popular throughout Europe and which were printed in both epic and rhymed form and translated into many vernaculars, several versions are known to have been produced in Middle Low German such as *Van der martere vnses heren Jhesu christi an de*[*m*] *hilligen guden vridage in der marter weken*[157] and *Vorsmack und Vrokost des hemmelischen Paradises*, which is similar to Book III of the *Speygel der dogede*.[158] Passio Christi texts were also included in most other catechetical texts and prayer books and also in an extensive paraphrase of the Gospel, *De nye Ee*.[159]

The *Boek der beschawynge to gode edder en spyghel der sammiticheyt*—Magdeburg 1492, Leipzig s.a. and Rostock 1507,[160] with the addition of the hymn *Veni redemptor spiritus*, includes pieces from lectionaries for domestic lay use with some of the prayers taken from lectionaries for women. It is not know to be modeled on any manuscript or on previous print editions.[161]

For another *Spegel der sammiticheyt*,[162] (not to be confused with the aforementioned *Boek der beschawynge*, despite the similar subtitle), a Middle Low German manuscript in the Stadtbibliothek Lübeck was probably the model, but this has not been verified.[163] In any case, if so, it is not a close adaptation. The text collects exempla, prayers and guidelines for a sinless life, descriptions of feast days and explanations of the Decalogue and the Pater Noster, with *glossae*.

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157 See appendix under *Passio*.
158 See appendix under *Spiegel*.
159 See appendix under *De nye Ee*.
160 See appendix under *Spegel der sammiticheit*.
161 Ruh, Kurt. "Boek der beschawynge." *VerfLex* IX, 123–124.
162 Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes 1487, GW M43100, BC 120.
163 Roth, Gunhild. "Spiegel der Sammiticheit III." *VerfLex* IX, 121–123.

Der Sele rychtestych, printed in Rostock in 1515, is an anonymous compilation; it contains mainly exempla and legends centered on biblical topics such as information about Jesus' face and haircut.[164]

The production of a text in the vernacular did not automatically mean it was intended for lay use, or even that laypeople were meant to be its main public. The liturgical collections of lectiones, sermons and catechetical pieces compiled for priests—plenaries—that were produced in Middle Low German are similar in many ways to other anonymous collections insofar as the books were dedicated to lay use in their introductions.[165] The production of catechetical texts in the vernacular was simply a well-established branch of book printing in Lübeck and Magdeburg.

Middle Low German Originals II: Treatises, Epic and Rhymed Texts

Erbauungsliteratur is a relatively broad term for a literary genre since the definition does not indicate formal aspects but is entirely based on the text's function—and religious and moral edification is a function of a majority of the early printings in the vernacular that do not address entirely pragmatic needs. There are, however, several epic texts with explicitly religious topics as well as treatises on aspects of everyday life that have a morally edifying focus. As is the case with catechetical compilations, the Middle Low German region provides a collection of epic and rhymed texts with an edifying quality that are not based on any known Latin or vernacular model text, but seem to have been originally written in the northern language.

A few treatises on different aspects of Christian life have also been preserved, but their generally sparse occurrence in Middle Low German print production needs more discussion, especially in those cases where we have an abundance of texts in other German languages such as treatises on matrimony. The two main texts in this genre were, as mentioned above, translations from High German. Otherwise, treatises are rare. An incunabulum catalogued as *Van viij stade de minschen in der Ee* is not a treatise, but a verbatim edition of Lübeck's luxury regulations from the 1470s, and thereby falls within the genre of political communications.[166]

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[164] Der Seele rychtestych. Rostock: Ludwig Dietz, 1515. BC 566, VD16 S 5414.

[165] Kämpfer, *Studien*, 170; 181.

[166] Van viij stade der minschen in der Ee, Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca. 1478]. BC 41, GW M43235. Fragment contained in incunabulum 1502, Library of the Geistliches Ministerium Greifswald. Thanks to Ivo Asmus, UB Greifswald, for finding the fragment and sending

The broadsheet *Eyne gotlike gude lere allen minschen*, produced in Lübeck by Bartholomäus Ghotan in 1491, which contains four-line rhymed pronouncements about inner-world virtues, economy and morals attributed to Church Fathers, theologists and the philosophers of antiquity, probably falls into the same category. Another broadsheet treatise, a rhymed guideline for acolytes, was printed both independently and within compilations.[167]

A treatise about the virgin life printed in Braunschweig in 1507, *De witte lilien der kuscheyt*, is a collection of didactical and devotional texts that uses the metaphor of a lily for the virtues that are required of a virgin. Since the first leaves are missing, it is not possible to determine whether or not the first text referring to the lilies is ascribed to Jean Gerson, but the subsequent text in the collection, another metaphorical text about the virtues of virgin life, in this case allegorized as maidens who serve the infant Jesus, is alleged to have been written by the Parisian theologian and deals with *De gestliche kynttycht* [spiritual childcare].[168]

There are three other treatises on the virgin life in Middle Low German, all anonymous. One either addresses both genders or prioritizes women. It was printed along with an explanation of the Decalogue in several editions and begins with *Audi filia et obliviscere domum patris tue—Hore dochter, vernym wes ik dy lere*.[169] Even though the incipit is the same, it is not a translation of the Latin *Instructio pie vivendi et superna meditandi*, which was translated and diffused in the Low Countries within *Devotio moderna* circles,[170] and, as such, its model text remains unknown.

A similar treatise, in this case addressing male monastic life and titled *Speigel der waren unde rechten Ynkere to gode* from 1508, describes a quite interesting model for a three-tiered differentiation of monks.[171]

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a copy. The text of the *Luxusordnung* in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck: 1466–1470.* Abtheilung 1, 11. Lübeck: Lübcke & Nöhring, 1905, nr. 311, 316–331, ibid., 321.

[167] See appendix under *Lehre*.

[168] Cf. the bibliographic information about this print in the introduction of this study.

[169] In: Die zehn Gebote [Low German] Wo een yslik gud cristen mynsche de theyn gebade gades wol vernemen schal. [Lübeck: Printer of Fliscus (Lucas Brandis?), about 1480]. Also recorded as [about 1475–78] and [Rostock: Fratres Domus Horti Viridis ad S. Michaelem]. BC 5, GW 10573, fol. 301v–304v.

[170] An edition of the Dutch "Hore dochter"-text is currently being prepared by Dr. Katty de Bundel, KU Leuven. Thanks to Professor Geert Claassens, KU Leuven, for information on the Dutch text, which obviously does not coincide with the Middle Low German text.

[171] Braunschweig: Hans Dorn, 1508. BC 438, VD16 S 8198, VD16 ZV 14627. The text is largely unused by recent scholarship. Scheller, Karl. *Bücherkunde der Sassisch-Niederdeutschen Sprache: Hauptsächlich nach den Schriftdenkmälern der Herzogl. Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel entworfen*. Braunschweig, Halberstadt: Fürstl. Waisenhaus; Vogler, 1826, 133–134, gives a short characterization.

The author mentioned is an anonymous Minorite Brother, and no model for the text is known. Another example of anonymous treatises on monastic life in the vernacular is *De pacientia libellus*, printed by Hermann Bungart in Cologne in 1510.[172] What is interesting about these books is that their reception changed considerably as the public changed, just as was the case for the bestseller *Imitatio Christi*. Originally meant as guidebooks for a discourse within monastic orders, the publication in the vernacular and in printed form meant they were also available to non-clerical readers, thereby changing the notion of monastic life in general. Suddenly the requirements for a monastic life were read as guidelines for a pious life in general, making the distinction between monastic and secular asceticism blurry as a result.[173]

Another text that has gone largely unaddressed in scholarly research is the Ripuarian *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, which draws upon different original concepts of the three orders of society and combines them with descriptions of the spiritual sightseeing stations in Cologne.[174] Cologne is the only town where texts with specific regional characteristics were printed. Besides the *Doernenkrantz*, there were Cologne-specific chronicles: the legends of the local saint Ursula and of the Three Kings whose relics are found in the Cathedral and the *Aflais und Heyldoms der Stadt Colne*,[175] which, like the *Doernenkrantz*, described the spiritual sightseeing highlights for those planning a pilgrimage to the town. Both of these texts could serve either as guidebooks for travelers and pilgrims from elsewhere or could be read as texts that encouraged the citizens of Cologne to identify positively with their community.

Cologne printer Hermann Bungart edited one more lay didactical text in the vernacular, *Van XII fruchten misse zu horen*, a lengthy treatise on the almost magically positive effects that hearing mass is said to have on people.[176]

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[172] De pacientia libellus. Eyn schoin buechelgyn van der edeler dueghden d' Verduldicheit. Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1510. BC 489, VD16 P 908. A short description of the book is also found in Schmitz, *Überlieferung*, 95.

[173] On this process see Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 47ff; and below chapter V.

[174] Dornenkranz von Köln [Low German] Der Doernenkrantz van Collen. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 9 Oct. 1490. BC 156, GW M16401. The language is actually not, as given in the ISTC catalogue, Low German, but Ripuarian. The same applies to several of the vernacular prints from Cologne.

[175] Aflais und Heyldoms der Stadt Colne [Low German]. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 18 Feb. 1492. BC 191, GW 8.

[176] Uan xii fruchten misse zo hoeren mit jnnicheit. Köln: Hermann Bungart, 1510. BC 481, VD16 V 370. Additional numbers assigned: VD16 V356, VD16 V371.

Rhymed texts are surprisingly rare among the Middle Low German printed documents. *Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen*, printed in two versions in Magdeburg,[177] is a rhymed monologue of the soul at the Last Judgment, which in part calls to mind the final section of the *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum*.[178] While these verses deal exclusively with religious issues, other rhymed texts present a mixture of religious didactics and commonplace moral advice for burghers: *Henselyns bok*, a rhymed play addressing the question of righteousness, which has long been presumed to have been intended for use at carnivals, is a case in point.[179] A didactical allegory about the estates by Braunschweig town scribe Hermann Bote, the *Boek van veleme rade*,[180] is rhymed, as is the adaptation of Jacobus de Cessolis' chess book *De ludo scachorum*. The Middle Low German version was written in Prussia by Master Stephan of Dorpat.[181] Even though the allegory of the chess game was a widely diffused text during the Middle Ages, the Middle Low German rhymed version is not based on another model text but is an original translation and reworking of a German version.[182] The two Lübeck versions of the Danse Macabre, *Des Dodes Dantz*, in essence followed a model found in the St. Mary's Church in that town and are closely connected to another picture cycle with death imagery in Tallinn.

In summary, some interesting examples among the incunabula and early prints with a greater focus on entertainment were originally written in Middle Low German. They were, however, not translated into other German languages and remain isolated cases. Besides their religious content, these texts contain elements of moral didactics, political theory and moral and practical philosophy. Many of them also contain a more or less

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[177] Dit is de claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, um 1489/91]. GW M44788; and Van dem jungesten tage. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, um 1493]. BC 234, GW M44789. The two prints have different introductions, but the rest of the text is almost identical.

[178] Falk, *Die deutschen Sterbebüchlein*, mentions a third Magdeburg edition from 1503, but this one is not contained in BC, the incunabula catalogues or the VD16.

[179] Henselyn [Low German verse]. [Lübeck: The Poppy Printer (Hans van Ghetelen), about 1498]. BC 305, GW 12267.

[180] See appendix under *Boek van veleme rade*.

[181] De ludo scachorum [Low German] Dat schakspel to dude. Tr: Stephan Meister. [Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, about 1490]. BC 316, GW 6531. Printed: *Meister Stephans Schachbuch: Ein mittelniederdeutsches Gedicht des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Edited by Wolfgang Schlüter. Dorpat: Laakmann, 1883.

[182] Plessow, Oliver. *Mittelalterliche Schachzabelbücher zwischen Spielsymbolik und Wertevermittlung: Der Schachtraktat des Jacobus de Cessolis im Kontext seiner spätmittelalterlichen Rezeption*. Münster: Rhema, 2007, 86–87; 109.

specific concept of the social order. These texts have traditionally received the most attention from scholars of literature, since they include European text traditions combined with original Middle Low German elements.

The definition of the Middle Low German region as a cultural space seems to be justified for several reasons: above all, the language, which was used in a somewhat standardized form during the late fifteenth century, faced specific problems in assigning religious meaning to words and concepts that derived from secular law and diplomatic language. Secondly, there is the question of translation—no texts written originally in Middle Low German were diffused in translation in the Upper German regions. Translations in the other direction were used for a smaller number of catechetical texts and treatises, which were modeled on printed documents from Augsburg and Nuremberg. However, the majority of catechetical and didactical texts were originally printed in Middle Low German, and have no clearly traceable manuscript or print model. It is striking that the usual model texts for the books printed in the vernacular in the southern German region, Latin manuscripts by well-known authors, were not used for books printed in the north. Instead, the Low Countries, and in some cases Augsburg, exercised influence on the models used by Lübeck and Magdeburg printers for their Middle Low German versions of books. It is not possible to answer the oft-raised question about the actual amount of work the printers themselves put into the preparation of the texts, but, considering their level of education, it is not likely that a majority of them engaged in translation. However, the general lack of manuscript models for Middle Low German compilations and catechisms proves that many books were directly prepared for print in the immediate surroundings of the printing presses. The demarcation between lay and clerical authorship is utterly blurred. The specific circumstances surrounding print production in the northern towns also means that the majority of the printed documents originally produced in Middle Low German are very late compared to the translations, which generally follow model texts from the beginning of the fifteenth century, if not much earlier. All of this makes incunabula and early print production in Middle Low German an original and distinguished cultural space.

There are a lot of methodological difficulties in describing a town's literary landscape based on print production. The analysis of the Latin versus the German production in the Middle Low German region does not solve these problems, but instead makes the difficulties even more apparent: even if the overall production in a town was very small, the printer might have specialized in a certain type of book, as was the case with the printer

of the so-called *Volksbücher* of the early sixteenth century in Hamburg.[183] In the towns with a more segmented market, the same tendency of printers to specialize is apparent, but this does not mean that the other printers in town would therefore focus on other types of books. Instead, the concentration of printing presses seemed to lead to assimilation of supply rather than competition between the different sales programs.

After this inventory of surviving exemplars of Middle Low German lay didactical literature, the division of texts into translations or originals, with the concomitant assignment of each to one of two different discourses, can be conducted at the level of the individual texts. One striking difference is the way the authority of the books was established.

I.4 *Names and Metaphors: Establishing Authority in Different Discourses*

The assignment of Middle Low German incunabula and early imprints to different discourses based on their origin either as translations or as originals can be substantially strengthened by analyzing how texts from each discourse establish their authority and, in this context, metaphors play a significant role. While pure metaphors for society are rare in Middle Low German didactical literature, other kinds of metaphors are abundant, and they are most prominently used to establish the authority of the texts themselves, particularly in the cases of anonymous Middle Low German compilations. Translated bestsellers, however, rely on more traditional means of establishing authority such as assigning the texts to a well-known author, often with a noble addressee. The place for presenting these different strategies is the book's introduction, where the title is explained, a summary of the content generally provided, the author possibly identified and a specific public addressed.[184]

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[183] The term *Volksbuch* was formerly used for entertaining collections of courtly novels or poems. It has been criticized because it involves the problematic implications of the term *Volk* in German: it suggests that the texts derive from a tradition of national narratives and are situated in the collective memory of a nation, one which did not exist in the Middle Ages, and which consequently could not provide the textual traditions for what was called a *Volksbuch*.

[184] The public mentioned in the introduction should not be taken to be the actual reading public or even to be the intended reading public, since the compilatory techniques often led to changes in the intended addressees during the course of the book, which derived from a combination of different sources. The assignment of a book to an exclusively male or female audience is especially difficult due to this fragmentary style. Examples of this are provided in chapter III about virgins, widows and married people.

A short survey of the metaphors used in the texts of the corpus will clarify the differences between these and metaphors for society more generally. There are differences regarding the metaphor's level of abstraction, its comprehensiveness (from a single word to an entire parable) and above all the amount of explanation the metaphor seems to require. The use of biblical metaphors had demonstrably decreased in religious didactics by the High Middle Ages.[185] Friedel Roolfs has argued that the Middle Low German religious literature of the early fifteenth century possessed picturesque language, but lacked a fixed inventory of metaphors, instead using exempla to clarify religious relations and facts.[186] This situation obviously changed with the arrival of the printing presses and the increase in text production, translation and compilation: by the end of the fifteenth century, Middle Low German possessed a broad inventory of metaphors and, while most metaphors for society were not yet fixed, other metaphors were, especially those created to structure and explain the books themselves.

The prominent place of exegesis of metaphors in the introductions of the books and their accompanying information on the author and the public establish their specific function: they constitute the book's authority as a means for education, gaining knowledge and, in the long run, achieving salvation. The connection of the addressed reading public—all humans, all Christians in general or a specific group of monks or priests—with the purpose of the book—metaphorized as a mirror, a carriage or a flower—shaped the relation between clergy and laity, between learned knowledge and everyday knowledge and between those who teach and those who learn. An additional aspect of these introductory metaphors lies in identifying the author: named or anonymous, assigned to a monastic order, someone with an academic education and degree or a secular priest. All of these factors add to the book's authority,[187] not necessarily as especially learned, but as useful to read and sometimes nearly sacred—the book as a means to salvation.

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185 Schumacher, *Sündenschmutz*, 650–651.

186 Roolfs, *Der "Spieghel der Leyen"*, 496.

187 On the question of textual authority in sermons see Schnell, Rüdiger. "Von der Rede zur Schrift: Konstituierung von Autorität in Predigt und Predigtüberlieferung." In *The construction of textual authority in German literature of the medieval and early modern periods*. Ed. by James F. Poag and Claire Baldwin, 91–134. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. He points out the importance of regional references and references to an author's religious order rather than naming the author as typical strategies for establishing authority.

Some religious metaphors have a fixed and established position in Middle Low German, but they are not used very frequently. Occasionally, biblically inspired metaphors that have recognition value, such as the "road of righteousness" or "the light of salvation," can be found, but they do not play a significant role in the texts and usually have very little context as the target domain for these metaphors is characteristically located in the area of spirituality, while the source domain is located in the areas of nature or technology. The more sophisticated metaphors follow this basic model of spirituality and nature, an example being found in the aforementioned incunabulum *De Witte Lilien*, the white lilies of chastity, where each of the lily's petals represents a daughter virtue to chasteness. The image of the lily structures the entire text, since each chapter represents one petal. The first page(s) of the collection is/are missing, so the first information we get is that St. Ambrose compared the virtues of a virgin to a lily, and that contemporary virgins should read and follow the text.[188] The text, or at least its leading metaphor, is ascribed to a Church Father. The next text in the collection, however, turns to a more contemporary author: the "spiritual childcare," *geystlike kynntucht*, metaphorizes virgin life as different maidens who nurse the infant Jesus. The text is said to have been written by "Jean Gerson, a chancellor of the High School in Paris, who wrote this book in Latin, with it later being presented in German by a spiritual father of the Order of St. Benedict."[189] The translator is said to have been asked by several spiritual persons to translate it, and the addressees are "Honorable spiritual virgins, dear sisters in God."[190] Even though Jean Gerson's authorship of this text cannot be verified, the mechanisms for shaping authority are the same: the use of a single metaphor for the entire structure of the text and identifying an author and a public, which was characteristic for texts translated from other languages and based in a more traditional learned discourse.

Other translated bestsellers take the addressees identified in their model texts if they seem useful for establishing the text's authority; for example, a dedication to a nobleman. *De hemmelsche funtgrove*, in its 1494 Magdeburg edition, names both the addressee of the book, "His Highness, the Highborn Lord and Prince Frederick, Duke of Saxonia and Archmarshal of the Holy Roman Empire and Prince-elector and Landgrave

[188] Witte lilien, fol. 2v.
[189] Ibid., fol. 17r.
[190] Ibid., fol. 17r–18v.

of Thuringia," and its author "Brother John of Valz, Doctor of the Holy Scripture, Brother of the Eremite order of St. Augustine, commissar of the Roman Graciousness in Thurgau."[191] After the pompous introduction the intended addressee, Frederick the Wise (Frederick III of Saxony), is asked to excuse the "poor and simple German" of the book, metaphorizing it as only obscuring but not concealing the important content: it is the rough peel that contains a good fruit and an ugly, ill-formed sack that contains a piece of gold.[192] In this way, the book is placed in a learned noble context—Frederick the Wise was known as and staged himself as a humanist, a sponsor of the arts and a learned man—and is introduced as a dialogue between two men who are better informed and more knowledgeable than other people, in this case, the eventual readers of the book. The leading metaphor of the heavenly mine, with each tunnel marking a different path leading to salvation structures the entire text, even though the compilatory method—the book is a combination of four different sermons—forces this structure far into the background. Furthermore, in this case, the strategies for establishing authority—identifying a clerical author and a noble audience and using a metaphor—are combined and follow the model text. These strategies are not only visible in those books with a purely religious character, but more entertaining books that follow older text traditions also use metaphors to create a structure and identify a noble reading public. The Middle Low German chess book names *de eddele lude*, the noble people, as those who will profit from reading it, as they are already familiar with the game of chess. The book itself is called *a book of morals and good deeds*,[193] combining the entertaining function of the chess game with the book's didactical purpose. Implicitly, the virtues described are assigned to the noble class.

Metaphors at a different level of abstraction structure the treatise about the Seven Mortal Sins, where each sin is represented by a woman riding an animal and carrying a coat of arms, with the text explaining the

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[191] "Dem důrchluchtigen hochgebaren fůrsten vnde heren herr fredericken hertoge to sassen des hylgen rommischen ryckes erczmarschalck vnde kůrforste lantgraue in doryngen [...] broder johann van valcz doctor der hilgen scryfft, ordens der eynsedeler broder sancti augustini commissarius der rommsschen gnaden to torgaw." Hemmelsche funtgrove, fol. 16r.—It must be noted that Frederick III was not "Duke" (*hertoge*) of Saxony but prince-elector (*Kurfürst*).

[192] "Bidde iuwe forstlick genade wolde nicht vorachten dat slychte dudesch so vaken vnder eyner grouen rynden eyn gud kerne vorborgen vnde in eynem grouen vngestalten budel gud golt is." Ibid.

[193] "Dat boek schal wesen en boek der sede / unde ok der guden werke mede / den eddelen luden dat wol mach temen." Schakspel, fol. 1v.

symbolic value and meaning of the figures—each of them represents a mortal sin—and their animals and attributes. The text contains many examples from the animal kingdom that additionally serve to explain sinful behavior such as the squirrel, which is used as a symbol for greed. In these cases, the semantic break between source area and target area is huge—for example, the squirrel's greed is illustrated by the behavior of the female, who helps the male to collect food throughout the summer, and then, after being rejected by the male, digs a hole through the wall of the male's hideout in order to steal his food.[194] The principle of the correspondence between the source domain and the target domain of the metaphors can only be comprehended within a very specific cultural context or by an explanation of the imagery, which in this case is equivalent to an exegesis in its extensiveness and its earnestness. The forms that metaphorizing takes are complex: they range from allegories (the women—the sins) through metaphors (the animals—qualities that come with the sins) to symbols (the coats of arms—other sins accompanying the original mortal sin).

The Middle Low German version of the treatise on the Seven Mortal Sins closely follows a 1482 Augsburg version, but uses a different introduction: in the case of the Augsburg version, "a highly learned man" is identified as the compiler of the text, while the Middle Low German version provides only a short introduction to the text itself, which it describes as "a spiritual exegesis" based on examples of women and the animals they are riding. It is possible that this is an early example of the reduced importance of clerical authors in Middle Low German printed documents.

Other examples of translated bestsellers include more or less radical changes to the introductions, thereby shifting the strategies for establishing authority. There is a detectable tendency among Middle Low German printed texts to omit the author's name, for example, in the case of the two editions of Andreas Proles' *Eyne ynnyge lere van der dope der kyndere*. Andreas Proles (1429–1503), after studying in Leipzig, was first a lecturer at the Magdeburg cathedral, then a prior in the Himmelpforten monastery in Werningerode. His works—besides the treatise on baptism, there are some surviving sermons—were not translated and diffused in the Upper German region. In the Leipzig edition, the introduction claims the text was written by an Augustinian monk, while in the Magdeburg edition there is no clue offered as to the author's identity, providing yet

[194] Dyt sint de seuen dotsunde, fol. 79r.

another indication of the general tendency to neglect clerical authorship as a means of establishing the authority of a Middle Low German printed document, particularly striking in this case as Andreas Proles was local to Magdeburg and probably known to some of the potential readers.[195]

A similar change is made in a catechetical book, both regarding the author and the addressees of the text. In the Middle Low German *Boek van der warafftighen vnde rechten leue gades*,[196] "a humble Carthusian" is mentioned as the author on the first page. The text is a German adaptation and translation of Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl's *De dilectione Dei*: we know of four High German incunabula editions in two redactions, all of them mentioning the anonymous Carthusian as the author. In the introduction, this anonymous author reveals more about himself: Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl, who wrote a second introduction to the book, was his teacher.[197] Mention is made of a priest in Augsburg, who copied the book three times for his own use and on whom the manuscript tradition and the Augsburg editions depend to provide a context for the text and to establish its authority.[198] This edition of the Thomas Peuntner text provides the only evidence of Vienna School texts being diffused in the north via contact with the Augsburg printer Johan Bämler or at least with his books. The *Boek van der warafftighen vnde rechten leue gades*[199] is among the translated bestsellers, and a triumvirate made up of a Vienna theology professor, a Carthusian author and a secular clerical sponsor are factors underpinning the authority of the text, even though the public is not personally acquainted with them.

The author and clerical authority in both the text and the model coincide even though it is questionable if Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl and the Augsburg priest actually served as meaningful points of reference for the northern public. It is likely that the fact that they belonged to the clerical

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195 Lehre von der Kindertaufe/Eyne ynnyge lere can der dope der kyndere, fol. 2r, quotes St. Paul and Wilhelmus Parisiensis, but names no author of the treatise.

196 Dat boek van der warafftighen vnde rechten leue gades, fol. 2r.

197 "Item de magister nicolaus van dynkelspul van deme de nauolgende vorrede is den hebbe ick wol bekant do ick eyn studente was to weyn, vnde allen meisteren vnde doctoribus der hylghen schryft was he de alderledeste vnde de vornameste wo weyn." Dat boek van der warafftighen vnde rechten leue gades, fol. 7r.

198 "So de perner to augsborch to vnser leuen frowen Her iohan wyltgefert dede is en licentiatus in gestliken rechten ein ghelerder man heft sick dyt boek to dren malen laten uthschryven vor sine eddele vnde hoch werdyghe nuttycheyt." Ibid., fol. 6v.

199 The *Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes* was the only text by Thomas Peuntner which was diffused in print. It exists in three different redactions, all made by the author himself. Schnell, Bernhard. "Peuntner, Thomas." *VerfLex* VII, 537–544.

order was considered more important than their celebrity in the north. In this case, the connection of the book and the clerical order is more developed in the High German models, and is considerably altered for the Middle Low German version. In the latter, the text addresses *leuen brodere*, "dear brothers," which could have served either to address a monastic audience or, in the context of lay didactical literature, more commonly a general audience. In so doing, it consciously breaks with the tradition of both manuscripts and High German model texts, which contain a *Vorrede des Karthäusers* [the Carthusian's introduction], naming a "Sister Christina" and her fellow sisters in an unspecified convent. A second introduction, in the 1487 Augsburg printed version, names a "Brother Conradt"[200]—all of these are left out of the 1497 Lübeck Middle Low German edition. The names of Brother Conradt and Sister Christina, together with the Carthusian author and the Parisian theologian, serve to establish the authority of the text. But the Middle Low German version—in which the names of the author and his teacher probably are meaningless and obscure—only imitates these techniques for establishing authority to a certain point. Since the cultural context supporting these particular techniques is lacking, the book addresses a very diffuse public. A conscious decision is taken not to mention a convent, and the amalgam of different introductions (*vorreden*), which assigns the original text to several different learned, clerical and monastic milieus, is reduced to the salutation "dear brothers."

The same is the case for the *Kerstenspiegel*: the public mentioned is "all humans," and its author, who remains anonymous, nonetheless humbly asks the public to read the book often and to read it out loud to those who are illiterate, because "it contains everything that is needed for the salvation of the soul." The author also establishes a close connection with readers by asking them to pray for him and promising to pray for all people who read the book and carry it with them.[201] In this way, authority

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[200] Stemma for the different text traditions and versions for the introduction can be found in Thomas Peuntner. *'Büchlein von der Liebhabung Gottes'.* Ed. by Bernhard Schnell. München: Artemis-Verl., 281.

[201] "Hyr beginnet ein schon spegel der cristen mynschen, welkeren eyn yewelk cristen minsche gerne schal by syk dregen vor ein hantbôkeken, wente hyr inne beslaten is allent dat dar not is to weten to der selen salicheyt, tosamende ghesocht vt velen hilghen schriften der lerers, to profite vnde salicheit aller minschen, vnde vnseme leuen heren to laue vnde marien syner leuen moder. De iene de dyt ghemaket heft biddet alle minschen dat se dat vaken euerlesen willen, vnde syk willen dar na regeren, ock dat den anderen simpelen vnweten lůden de nicht lesen konen des hilgen daghes vorlezen willen, wen se doch leddich sitten vp der straten, dar vor se grote pine liden mothen. Ock biddet he dat

is shifted from a clerical author to the book itself, and in an additional step to the readers themselves when they use the book. The author also remains anonymous in the Dutch models used to produce the Middle Low German version, being identified simply as "a brother, whose name will be written in the book of life by God." This approach to remaining anonymous, while at the same time providing the information necessary to establish clerical authority, differs substantially from the approach taken in the Middle Low German version.

The translated bestsellers use traditional means to establish their authority, claiming clerical authors and a connection to noble or clerical sponsors, as well as to learned theological persons and institutions. In many cases, the references to clerical authorship are explicitly removed in the Middle Low German versions of these translations. Monastic authors and texts basically had nothing to say to an urban public, since monasticism was conceived of as an ideological and practical alternative to urbanism itself. Consequently, monastic authors and their audiences are said to have lacked the tools and the experience necessary for understanding contemporary urban societies.[202] It is tempting to connect the relatively small production of books of this type that had explicitly identified monastic authors in the Middle Low German area with the significance of the towns in this region—but alas, in the south the towns were equally established, important and existed in even greater numbers, and many monastic authors figure in the sources produced. Where a target public is mentioned in these cases, it is a single nobleman or a clerical community, which significantly differs from the means of establishing authority that were used in the original Middle Low German books. The latter instead attempt to establish the texts themselves as authoritative and of an almost sacramental importance, with metaphors serving as an important rhetorical device for achieving this. Sometimes the traditional strategies for establishing authority appear alongside some kind of apology for the books being written in German. Significantly, no reference is made to the stylistic differences in the translated editions, something that was common for direct translations from Latin. An earlier method had been to attempt to reproduce as closely as possible the Latin style and

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de olderen ere kinder dat lesen leren. Ok so begeret he dat men vor em bidden wille wente he vorbindet sik alle sine dage to biddende vor de genne de dyt bôkeken by sik dreghen vnde mit vlite sik dar na regeren." Kerstenspiegel, Rostock 1507, fol. 1v.

202 Milis, Ludovicus. "Monks, Canons, and the City: A Barren Relationship?" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no. 4 (2002).

structure in German, which often made the texts incomprehensible for German readers. By the fourteenth century, a freer translation was the generally favored approach. Apologies for this latter method were still to be found in the High German catechisms of the fifteenth century,[203] but not in those produced in Middle Low German.

The *Bokeken van dem repe* marks the step from offering excuses for writing in German to treating the German language as both a necessary choice and a way for the author to produce the text more quickly. The leading metaphor, the rope, is the main factor used to establish authority. A translation of the Czech *Provázek třípramenný* by Jan Hus was presumably produced by one of two Rostock scholars, Nicolaus Rutze or John of Lübeck, but neither of these two is mentioned in the book itself, which is not surprising, since Jan Hus was burned at the stake in Constance in 1415 and his writings were considered heretical. The *Bokeken van deme repe* or *Boek van dren strenghen* is the only known German-language translation: differences from the Czech text raise the possibility that the translator was influenced not only by Hussitism, but even more so by Waldensianism. Only one copy of the book has been preserved. Lutheran theologian Mathias Flacius Illyricus wrote in the middle of the sixteenth century that Catholic inquisitors had attempted to eradicate the entire edition and that "a good man had kept an entire box of copies and buried it in the ground, and that the books had remained interred until the time of Luther."[204] We have no contemporary information about inquisitorial attempts to constrain the distribution of the book, though, and it is therefore unclear whether the Catholic authorities had in fact perceived the *Bokeken van deme repe* as a Hussite heretical text and treated it accordingly—considering the number of catechetical works circulating without Episcopal or Papal authorization, it remains likely that it eluded their attention and was sold as a catechism like any other. The printer Johan Snel, in any case, was commissioned to produce numerous ecclesiastical works, and it seems questionable that he would have wanted to jeopardize this secure source of income by knowingly printing a recognized heretical text.

Since the Czech original is only preserved in a much later version that was not authorized by Jan Hus, it is impossible to determine whether the author originally had been identified. The Middle Low German translation

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[203] Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 11.

[204] Cit. after Molnár, Amedeo. "Einleitung." In Jan Hus, *Dat bokeken van deme repe.* Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 1971, s. p.

uses a rhetorical approach to establishing authority that once again differs from the orthodox translated bestsellers: it is addressed to "all humans, drowning in their sins," to whom the author hopes to cast a rope with which they might drag themselves out of hell. The metaphor of the rope is maintained throughout the book and is central to each chapter: drawing on a quotation from Ecclesiastes 4:12, a strong rope is to be made out of three strands, which are presented in the Hussite text as hope, love and faith (1 Cor 13:13), an antitype in the Old Testament and a type in the New Testament. The source domain of the metaphor is not a spiritual concept, but the book itself, a common factor in most anonymous Middle Low German compilations.

Together with the emphasis on the book as the central part of the leading metaphor, the introduction removes the focus from the author, but highlights the readers and authors of other books: "Since the people do not like to hear long speeches, and German writers do not like to write—and if they do, they write falsely—and since I also cannot be free from my duties for a longer time, I wish to draw attention to a rope made out of three strands."[205]

The leading metaphor is used in order to establish the book's authority, playing with the ambiguous boundary between literal and figurative readings: it *is* a rope that can drag sinners out of hell. In the case of the Hussite text, a translation that is not part of a traditional or even orthodox Catholic discourse, this feature is probably meant not only as a way to obscure the prohibited author's identity, but also to indicate that the book belongs to a non-traditional discourse. This is a common strategy employed in many Middle Low German originals.

The catechetical compilation *Licht der Seelen* begins with seven different metaphors for the book: the hunter, the hunting dog, the light of the soul, the bath of the soul, a joy for the holy trinity and all of the angels, the sorrow of the devils and the shelter of the soul. These are explicitly called "the seven names of the book," thus marking the distinction between the object and the name, clearly indicating and clarifying the metaphorization. Each of the names refers to the book as a medium for spiritual experience, and they place the reader on the side of those who are good, godly and beloved in opposition to the devils. The different names represent

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205 "Unde so de lude nicht gherne horen langhe rede, unde de dudeschen schrivere schriven nicht gherne—doch schriven se wat, so schriven se it unrecht—unde so ik ok nicht langhe kan leddich wesen, darumme so beghere ik to merkende einen rep van dren strenghen." Bokeken van deme repe, fol. 1r.

quite different levels of metaphor, from abstract and complex hunting metaphors—where the hunter is the confessor and the deer is the soul to be saved—to more simple and concrete metaphors, which are clearly marked as "bath of the soul." The metaphor that establishes the book's authority and the book's function is basically the same here, and the metaphor—or name of the book—is meant to assure the reader of the book's positive and edifying function.

This method is also used in the Books of Mirror, with the imagery of the texts as a mirror in which the reader is meant to see himself and, in consequence, to improve. This metaphor has been in use ever since Greek antiquity, and Middle Low German books are still clarifying the image,[206] as, for example, the *Speygel der dogede*, which starts: "This book is called a mirror of all virtues, since just as a person can see his face in a mirror, can see how it is shaped and whether or not it is dirty, in the same way, a person should use this book to look into their conscience."[207] The explanation of the metaphor is introduced with the term *wente lykerwis*, "since similar to", which is reminiscent of the suggestion found in classical teachings about rhetoric that if a speaker wanted to convey something unusual and advanced to a simple-minded public to soften the challenge, the formula *ut ita dicam* should be used.[208]

Speygel der dogede directs its introduction to all mankind and quotes St. Augustine and St. Paul on the inevitability of the Last Judgment and the necessity of exploring one's conscience.[209] The *Menschenspiegel* is much less explicit in that it uses the metaphor of a mirror but does not explain it. "It is called the Mirror of Humans, in which one learns to recognize oneself and the road of eternal salvation." The author is identified as a "highly educated spiritual father,"[210] thereby providing a more authoritative author for a weaker metaphor. The same method is employed in *Der sele Rychtestych*, which is said to be "compiled from the writings of several holy teachers, by a devout man whose name is known to God." The title, *Der sele Rychtestych*, the guideline of the soul, claims the book itself to be a tool against the devil. This is reinforced by the woodcut on the title page,

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206 *Speygel der leyen*, on the other hand, abandons the option of explaining the title of the book, and instead starts by establishing the nature of the master-student relationship.

207 Speygel der dogede, fol. 2r.

208 Weinrich, Harald. "Semantik der kühnen Metapher." In Haverkamp, ed. *Theorie der Metapher*, 316–339, ibid., 316.

209 Speygel der dogede, fol. 2r–2v.

210 Menschenspiegel, fol. 2r.

which shows the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist at the Cross, and John is holding a book in his hand.[211]

The metaphors used to establish authority present reading as a spiritual matter. The metaphors address things that individuals, and not groups, should do: they offer guidelines for the individual, not for society as a whole. The metaphors are not intended simply for the context of the book itself, but also for the catechetical and confessional situation in general. For instance, the confessor is supposed to search for the penitent's sins like the hunter of wild animals in the woods. The light of the soul is sermons and Scripture, and the hard broom is the confessor.[212]

The anonymous *Doernenkrantz van Collen* uses as its title a metaphor, which appears on the title page above a woodcut of the Crucifix surrounded by a crown of thorns. The name of a church or monastery in Cologne is printed beside each prong. The metaphor is not explained in the introduction, which addresses the book to travelers and pilgrims to Cologne as a guideline of how to behave while they are in the town.[213] Part of the content of the book is a suggested tour of Cologne's spiritual sites, so the image suggests the town itself is a crown of thorns for Jesus, positively intended to mean that the town offers an abundance of possibilities for contemplating the Passion of Christ and for wearing his crown of thorns in spiritual imitation.

A distinctive feature of the obvious and "real" metaphors (in the narrow meaning of the term: an abstract object is explained with the help of a concrete object, connecting the two on the basis of some sort of similarity) in Middle Low German religious literature is that their target domain is in the area of spirituality or, more concretely, of reading as part of spiritual development. The source domain is everyday life, from broomsticks to animals and flowers, and the semantic break is usually explained and often marked by a formula indicating figurative speech and suggesting

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[211] Der sele rychtestych, fol. 1r–1v. "Rychtestych" literally means "guiding path" or "straight path." *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch III*, 474.

[212] "De erste name de het de ieger, alszo eyn gut ieger soket dat wilt in dem wolde [...] also schal de bichtuader ok eyn kloek und eyn gud iegher syn deme mynschen to besokende, unde to vraghende in der bichte in allerleye wyse alse vor geschreven steyt, eynem ysliken mynschen na synem state. Dar helpet dit boek wol to, unde dar vmme ys dat ghelyck deme yegher [...] Dat licht der selen is de predekye, unde de hillighe schrifft. Alzo mach de mynsche erkennen syne sunde in dessem boke. De scharpe bessem is eyn wys unde scharp gud bichtvader, deme schal men gerne soken." Licht der Seelen, fol. 6r–6v.

[213] Doernenkrantz van Collen, fol. 3r.

how the metaphor should be interpreted.[214] These metaphors are easy to decode, and there are probably many examples of each one as well as of different but similar ones in texts of the same genre in other areas and languages, including non-religious texts.

As the comparison between the translated bestsellers and the anonymous Middle Low German compilations shows, traditional and new methods for establishing authority are used according to the discourses they belong to. When following an older model text, the books are often dedicated to a single prominent reader or a monastic community, while anonymous books are addressed to laypeople, to simple and uneducated people or simply to all Christians. Translated bestsellers make intensive use of metaphors, and the entire text is structured in a way reminiscent of traditional Bible exegesis and heraldic texts; for example, the treatise about the Seven Mortal Sins. Many of them identify a clerical author and a clerical or noble recipient.

The anonymous compilations use metaphors to establish authority and to remind the reader of the book's significance despite the lack of prominent authors and sponsors, one is tempted to say. They shift the focus away from the author towards the act of reading, an act of self-empowerment by which the laity can gain the same spiritual gifts they previously did from the preaching of a priest. The metaphors also shift the focus from a noble addressee of the book, and thereby its locus in a learned and courtly milieu, to that of "all Christians." That these different strategies for establishing authority seem to work and to be accepted indicates that the laity reading and the potential for laypeople to achieve salvation by learning about religious mysteries and living accordingly were both already widely accepted concepts. The method for compiling texts was obviously one that did not require that a prominent or clerical author be identified. Instead, the printers, translators and compilers had different strategies for commending their products and positioning them on the market as valuable contributions to a spiritual journey.

The identification of two different discourses in a large and for the most part stereotypical corpus of sources cannot provide more than a rough guideline with many exceptions. Nonetheless, the investigation of Middle Low German print production has shown that this differentiation is more

[214] This relates to the results of Kövecses' study about emotion metaphors. Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor and emotion: Language, culture, and body in human feeling*. Cambridge, U.K., New York, Paris: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 381–382.

than an abstract and anachronistic tool for handling a large number of texts. The two discourses emerge as a result of several factors specific to Middle Low German print production: which texts migrated from west to east and from south to north; how much of a text and which parts were printed; and the source of the models. The distinction between the two discourses has been further reinforced by analyzing textual strategies for establishing authority, which clearly differed in translated bestsellers and Middle Low German originals.

These reflections overwhelmingly serve to consolidate the definition of the Middle Low German region as a space of its own: this region constitutes a cultural area in which the nature of print production differed entirely from the situation found in the south. As such, the two discourses can potentially be assigned to different cultural areas. The translated bestsellers not only belong to a learned tradition, but also reflect the tradition's general European influences, expressed in the amalgam of Christian theological writing. Middle Low German originals, on the other hand, represent a more local tradition, and thus can be seen as more specific to the Baltic Sea region.

CHAPTER TWO

THE "REAL WORLD": SOCIAL GROUPS IN NORMATIVE AND LEGAL SOURCES

Lay didactical literature is influenced by numerous discourses. Besides the learned discourse from theological writings available in Latin and thereby in all of Christian Europe, some of which were translated into the vernacular for lay audiences, a more local and arguably more progressive discourse can be distinguished in the Middle Low German originals. The social imagery found in lay didactical literature relied, reasonably enough, on both the Latin religious and the vernacular pragmatic textual traditions—the latter will be investigated in this chapter. The social groups mentioned in urban legal texts, luxury regulations and tax registers also provide information about the socio-historical background and stratifications of the late medieval Hanseatic towns. While not suggesting a hierarchy of reliability for the information on social groups found in lay didactical literature as opposed to that found in normative, legal and pragmatic sources, it is nonetheless the case that the latter can serve as a matrix for the local vernacular tradition from which lay didactical literature derived its imagery. The different sites of discourse for distinguishing people and shaping social orders—religious, legal, and economic—are intertwined, by a shared language and terminology, if nothing else. We have a considerable amount of information and many sources addressing the social history of late medieval towns, and these provide the matrix that determines the backdrop upon which religious texts act and formulate their vision of society.[1]

Sources regarding these pragmatic divisions of society are mostly of a normative character (sumptuary laws, *Burspraken*, town laws), as well as economic documents (toll lists, bond markets, sales certificates, and account books). A pragmatic source that will be included in this comparison is a Middle Low German book of formulas, a printed guide about how

[1] A thoughtful attempt at finding a connection between the real world and literature is to be found in Beck, Jonathan. "A critical moment in the history of 'Hierarchy': Secular literature in France in the Age of Schism and the Conciliar Movement." In *Jacob's ladder and the tree of life: Concepts of hierarchy and the great chain of being*. Ed. by Marion L. Kuntz and Paul G. Kuntz, 161–210. New York: Lang, 1988.

to address higher and lower secular and ecclesiastical officials.[2] The names and labels used for social groups in these sources correspond in part with the results of modern scholarship regarding the economic, political and social dividing lines in medieval urban societies, but also partially contradict them.[3] In particular, greater distinction in the use of the term "urban upper class" seems necessary to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the intended reading public for lay didactical literature and of the social embedding of lay urban ideology in the texts. In her study of lay pamphlets during the Reformation, Miriam Usher Chrisman has suggested establishing a list of social groups based on normative sources, and then sorting the different lay pamphlet writers into different categories in order to analyze what she calls "the social dimension of ideas."[4] She points out the omnipresence of social divisions and claims, while simultaneously asserting that in the fifteenth century no clear rules governed these distinctions, and that generally there were more distinctions within the upper classes than among the lower classes.[5] Her examples derive from the study of towns in the southern German lands, but similar examples can be found for the north. While Usher Chrisman focuses on identifying actual social groups in normative sources, in the context of the present study it is more important to focus on the linguistic forms of expressing social distinction, particularly since Usher Chrisman's opinion that the criteria for social categories are unclear also holds for the northern towns since there was a high level of social mobility in at least some of them. The different political structures in Cologne, Lübeck, Braunschweig, Magdeburg, Hamburg and Rostock further complicate the picture. However, we do know a lot about the social history of late medieval towns, and inevitably this knowledge must be applied to findings about the linguistic representations of power relations found in urban literature.

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[2] Formulare/Büchlein der Titel aller Stände: wie man einem Fürsten schreiben soll [Low German] Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal. Magdeburg: [Simon Koch (Mentzer)], 26 Aug. 1490. GW 570120N. For other versions, see appendix under *Formulare*.

[3] On strategies of social differentiation in late medieval towns see Schmieder, Felicitas. "Städte im mittelalterlichen Reich als Ort und Motor gesellschaftlichen Wandels. Alte Gruppen—neue Gruppen—verschiedene Gruppen." In *Europa im späten Mittelalter: Politik—Gesellschaft—Kultur*. Ed. by Rainer C. Schwinges, 339–355. München: Oldenbourg, 2006.

[4] Chrisman, Miriam U. *Conflicting visions of reform: German lay propaganda pamphlets, 1519–1530*. Boston, MA: Humanities Press, 1996, 14.

[5] Ibid., 22–23.

Additionally, a survey of the social stratification of the Hanseatic towns is relevant for determining the reading public. We cannot assume that books from Lübeck were only read in Lübeck: the urban centers have to be treated as a common cultural area despite the differences in their political and social structures—an approach that is followed, for example, in research about urban literature in the neighboring Low Countries.[6]

Based on factors such as wealth, education and political influence, both the terms "urban upper class/elite" and "laity" are often used to describe the reading public, but each has serious flaws in terms of accuracy, and these have been discussed by scholars for some time now.[7]

"The urban upper class"

Admittedly, the use of the term "ideology" for medieval societies is anachronistic, and it entails the employment of a series of other anachronistic terms. Ideology as a set of social practices supporting a certain social group might easily be explained regarding clerical ideology, a set of beliefs supporting the clergy and its claim for spiritual and political authority. But how should an urban lay equivalent be named? The existence of a certain social group whose claims for authority were supported by a certain non-clerical and non-noble ideology has been clearly proven by social historians, despite the lack of sufficient terminology. In order to avoid the problematic terminology around the "bourgeoisie" entirely, this group must be defined in mostly negative terms. Those who made the upper social strata of the towns and their political elite were non-noble, non-clerical men, not in all cases merchants, and usually with the status of burgher. Their families belonged to the same social stratum, but the legal category of burghers applied differently to women and children. Social historians of the late medieval urban life have stated that indeed in most towns a stratum existed which shared a common set of cultural values and manifested these through common social activities such as guilds, feasts and processions. Depending on the town and its social composition,

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[6] Pleij, Herman. "Restyling 'Wisdom,' Remodeling the Nobility, and Caricaturing the Peasant: Urban Literature in the Late Medieval Low Countries." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no. 4 (2002).

[7] Pleij, Herman. "What and How did Lay Persons read, or: Did the Laity actually read? Literature, Printing and Public in the Low Countries between the Middle Ages and Modern Times." In *Laienlektüre und Buchmarkt im späten Mittelalter*. Ed. by Thomas Kock, 13–32. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997; Schreiner, "Grenzen," 1–20.

it seems more or less adequate to call this stratum an urban patriciate. But the factors of gender and age effectively separate those who belong to the same cultural and economic class from those who were supported by a "bourgeois" ideology—further explanation is required.

While the concrete political circumstances differed considerably from town to town, the basic social structure within the northern German towns of the Hanseatic League was strikingly similar: there were *Ratsfähige* (those eligible for the city council) and their families, who were most often in a struggle with ecclesiastical institutions, generally the Cathedral Chapter, and with members of craft guilds who were not allowed to participate in political decision-making to the same extent. Then there were the rest: the majority of urban citizens and inhabitants, who in their lives and work did not share the political and economic benefits that the Hanseatic League and its foreign affairs policy provided to the urban upper class.

All of the northern German Hanseatic towns experienced several more or less violent uprisings during the Late Middle Ages, centering on the conflicts between different social groups regarding their political influence and generally involving clerical groups, most often the Cathedral Chapters.[8] Conflicts involving monasteries occurred less frequently. What in earlier historiographic research were often called *Zunftkämpfe* (guild struggles) in fact provide insight into the shape of conflicts engaged in by the leading families and their shifting allies. The outcomes varied, but these struggles did not usually result in an oligarchy based on a certain craft or guild. There is no evidence of generalized crises in the economic and political circumstances of the various towns, but rather of short, rapid cycles of economic growth and decline with a concomitant high level of social mobility in all directions, causing conflicts and uprisings. These were an expression of a general social dynamic that resulted from the distinction between economic and political influence, motivating certain groups and families to struggle to harmonize the two.[9]

The basic division in the sources between upper and lower, called *dives* and *pauper* or *maiores* and *meliores*, derives from feudal society and was applied to urban society accordingly. The *dives*, in feudal society the free

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[8] Hergemöller, Bernd-Ulrich. "Krisenerscheinungen kirchlicher Machtpositionen in hansischen Städten des 15. Jahrhunderts: (Braunschweig, Lüneburg, Rostock, Osnabrück)." In *Städtische Führungsgruppen und Gemeinde in der werdenden Neuzeit*. Ed. by Wilfried Ehbrecht, 313–348. Köln: Böhlau, 1980; Ehbrecht, Wilfried. *Konsens und Konflikt: Skizzen und Überlegungen zur älteren Verfassungsgeschichte deutscher Städte*. Köln: Böhlau, 2001.

[9] Ehlers, Joachim. "Hermen Bote und die städtische Verfassungskrise seiner Zeit." In Schöttker/Wunderlich, eds. *Hermen Bote*, 119–131, ibid., 121.

and propertied, were the politically and economically leading groups. A basic prerogative for political offices was what Max Weber called *Abkömmlichkeit*, freedom from daily physical or intellectual labor as a means of sustenance. Living on annuities and benefits was therefore an important distinction from those who had a profession in the modern sense of the term. But again, in the Hanseatic towns things were different, since the representatives for the *Hansetage* (the annual meetings of the Hanseatic towns) were actively working merchants until sometime around 1470. It was only afterwards that rentiers took over these duties.[10]

Elements for a Hanseatic self-identification and ethos of the burghers were collected from both monastic and noble traditions.[11] Monasticism provided a focus on the necessity for hard work, discipline and self-sufficiency that was quite suitable for mercantile and administrative elites. Courtly culture introduced a notion of the value of adventure and risk-taking.[12] However, compared to the southern German centers, the urban upper class in the Hanseatic towns was much more strictly divided from the local nobility. In Ulm, Augsburg and Nuremberg, for example, the urban patriciate in the fifteenth century was a conglomerate of merchant families, some of them ennobled, and older noble families, with the first quickly and comprehensively adopting the economic and cultural means of the latter. The "feudalization of the urban merchants" and the mutual "bourgeoisification of the nobility,"[13] spoken of in regards to the southern centers, must be addressed quite differently for the northern towns, because the local nobility was not an ally but usually an enemy, and not much crossover occurred.

A further complication is that the terms "upper class" or "elite", as was the case for "patriciate" and "town nobility", are anachronistic and can only serve as analytical terms if properly clarified. "Patriciate", for example, can be defined as a term deriving from constitutional law, thereby meaning that a group of people confines access to political office entirely

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[10] Graßmann, Antjekathrin. "Sozialer Aufstieg um 1500 in Lübeck." In *Sozialer Aufstieg: Funktionseliten im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Ed. by Günther Schulz, 97–111. München: Boldt im Oldenbourg-Verl., 2002, ibid., 108.

[11] Cf. Dünnebeil, Sonja. *Die Lübecker Zirkel-Gesellschaft: Formen der Selbstdarstellung einer städtischen Oberschicht.* Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1996.

[12] Pleij, "Restyling Wisdom," 704.

[13] Brady, Thomas A. "Patricians, Nobles, Merchants: Internal Tensions and Solidarities in South German Urban ruling Classes at the Close of the Middle Ages." In *Social groups and religious ideas in the sixteenth century*. Ed. by Miriam U. Chrisman, 38–45. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Inst. Western Mich. Univ., 1978, ibid., 45.

to its own ranks, with only male members of the families eligible for the city council, but in Lübeck, for example, this sort of exclusivity concerning access to the city council was never a factor. Instead, the patriciate constituted itself exclusively on the basis of social and economic patterns with the potential for mobility and for additional families to become part of the patriciate.[14] In Cologne, a patriciate existed up until 1396 after which the urban elite lost its exclusive hold and, as a result, the patriciate's basic prerogatives ceased to exist, although the overall potential for upward social mobility remained largely unaltered.[15]

Recent studies using methods of social history have tried to distinguish between institutional factors supporting the formation of a patriciate such as the right to participation in the political institutions, the structures of the corporations and the patterns of recruitment, and the symbolic forms of presentation such as collective memory, rituals and signs of recognition such as clothes and badges.[16] The distinction is problematic, since it suggests a power that shapes the institutions but is separate from the powers that shape the symbolic forms. However, the collection of alleged factors for the formation of an exclusive urban upper class is compelling and shows the amount of cultural and legislative effort that was put into this formation process. A recurring issue is the status of women and children within this system—the factors determining political participation exclude women from the upper ranks, but other factors, such as education and social participation, include them. Generally the family must be seen as the primary factor for social stratification, even though this meant different things for male and female family members. Miriam Usher Chrisman has also identified this recurring problem in the sumptuary laws of the southern German imperial cities, where women were barely mentioned in the sources from the late fifteenth century, but were ordered according to a sophisticated system during the sixteenth century, with the general tendency to place women from higher ranked families at the level

[14] Seggern, Harm von. "Sozialgeschichte der Lübecker Oberschichten im Spätmittelalter—Eine Einleitung." In *Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte Lübecker Oberschichten im Spätmittelalter*. Ed. by Harm von Seggern, 1–16. Kiel: Historisches Seminar der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, 2005, ibid., 1–3.

[15] Herborn, Wolfgang. "Professionalisierung der politischen Führungsschicht der Stadt Köln." In Schulz, ed. *Sozialer Aufstieg*, 29–47, ibid., 31.

[16] Hecht, Michael. *Patriziatsbildung als kommunikativer Prozess.* Köln, Münster: Böhlau, 2010, passim.

of their husbands, while women from the lower ranks were grouped one rank below their husbands.[17]

Although differences between those pursuing lay careers and those pursuing ecclesiastical careers remained, both genders of the urban upper class must have been highly literate. There were the schools situated at cathedral seats, in monasteries and at foundations, which were designed to prepare postulants for an ecclesiastical career, and where instruction was in Latin. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many city councils struggled with the Cathedral Chapters for control of the schools. In Lübeck and Hamburg, there were also non-clerical schools for both the upper and the lower burghers from the beginning of the fifteenth century on, at the latest. That schools and education were common is also reflected in the catechetical books themselves; for example, the Cologne 1473 catechism, which mentions both the necessity for children to go to school and not run around in the streets and the duty of the city government to provide decent, well-educated school teachers.[18] In Braunschweig, the city council had successfully won the right to establish two lay schools in 1420 as a result of the *Pfaffenkrieg*, which had lasted for several years.[19]

In some schools, the sons and daughters of the urban elite were taught a form of Latin and vernacular that was designed to prepare them for careers in the urban functional elite—administrates, scribes, lawyers—or in the area of trade. Beginning at the end of the fourteenth century, there were also the so-called writing schools in the Hanseatic towns, which were important for the emergence of all areas of pragmatic literature that did not require a higher education or a grasp of Latin: accounting, basic rules of trade, basic knowledge of laws and correspondence, and the functions of the urban chanceries.[20]

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[17] Chrisman, *Conflicting visions*, 26–27.

[18] "Item so sal men die kynderen guet tyt ter schole setten ende van den straten bringen, ende nicht tot alle scholen vnt gemeyne dan dar die meste mester ys die seluen van guden leuen ende regymente ys. Ende alst sanctus augustinus secht ende hugo so bynnen die vorwesers eenre stad schuldich daer vp toe seyne by eren ede ende erer selen salicheit, dat sy vprechtige, geleerde ende dogedelike scholemesters holden." Tafel des kerstlyken leuens, fol. 9r.

[19] Märtl, Claudia. "Braunschweig. Eine mittelalterliche Großstadt." In Märtl et al., eds. *Die Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Braunschweigischen Landes*, 358–403, ibid., 396.

[20] Around 1500, on the basis of sources from the villages, a basic literacy can also be assumed for the rural areas in the north, Lorenzen-Schmidt, Klaus-Joachim. "Schriftliche Elemente in der dörflichen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Das Beispiel Schleswig-Holstein." In *Kommunikation in der ländlichen Gesellschaft vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne*. Ed. by Werner Rösener, 169–187. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2000.

In summary, regardless of the many structural differences, eligibility for the city council was the major factor determining membership in the urban upper class—*de Rat*, the council, consequently plays a central and crucial role in most legal and normative sources from the northern towns. Closely connected to this are both the exclusion of professions from the council and the economic status of the upper class.

What actual percentage the upper class constituted in the various towns can also be estimated using tax registries: in Braunschweig, 15–20 percent of its approximately 18,000 inhabitants belonged to the economic and political elite,[21] while in Hamburg, this number rose to 35 percent. In Lübeck, with its 22–24,000 inhabitants, 26.5 percent of the citizens, or 15.4 percent of the total population, were counted as part of the highest social group according to the *Schoßregister* (lists of direct taxes) from the Late Middle Ages.[22] In the case of Lübeck, Ahasver von Brandt's analysis pinpoints three different income groups in the *Schoßregister*, but the distinction is his and not one made in the sources.[23] In the Lübeck tax registries, there is also an indication of a possible definition of the upper class that can be derived from the sources themselves: those who were allowed to pay their direct taxes (*Schoß*) anonymously—all citizens who had a taxable asset of more than 768 mark Lübisch. This group constituted about one-fifth of all those who paid direct tax, i.e., citizens, inhabitants who were not citizens, secular clergy and so on.[24] The second wealthiest group, according to these registries, comprised about 1500–1600 people, or 7.3 percent of the total population. This latter distinction is not, however, included in the sources, but comes from the effort of modern scholars to establish a structure.

There is another type of source that defines the upper class uniquely based on wealth: the *Luxusordnungen*, which were often comprised of a model divided into five or more groups based on the taxes families paid.[25] In Braunschweig, for example, belonging to the upper class was possible if a man owned a horse worth five marks or more, according to the 1444 *Echteding*, which therefore allowed him and his wife to wear the most

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[21] Märtl, "Braunschweig," 366.

[22] Brandt, Ahasver von. "Die gesellschaftliche Struktur des spätmittelalterlichen Lübeck." In *Lübeck, Hanse, Nordeuropa: Gedächtnisschrift für Ahasver von Brandt*. Ed. by Klaus Friedland and Rolf Sprandel, 209–232. Köln: Böhlau, 1979, ibid., 216.

[23] Ibid., 210–221.

[24] Ibid., 219.

[25] Wensky, Margaret. "Städtische Führungsschichten im Spätmittelalter." In Schulz, ed. *Sozialer Aufstieg*, 17–27, ibid., 22.

expensive style of clothing, as long as the household continued to own the horse. The group below this consisted of those who paid direct taxes on assets of less than one hundred marks, followed by those who paid *Schoß* on less than thirty marks. The regulations governing the clothing of widows worked accordingly.[26]

Based on these different attempts to define and distinguish an urban upper class, it becomes clear that potential distinctions are contained in the sources—the *rat, dives, maiores*, those who pay direct tax anonymously—but that there were also always additional factors for stratification that modern scholars take into account but which mostly are not part of the distinctions made in the sources. For example, those who make up the group ranked the highest economically in Lübeck were probably all *ratsfähig* but, as they remain anonymous, we cannot be certain of this. The different factors for social stratification of the upper class are more the result of the efforts of modern scholarship than of features found in the historical sources even though terms such as *dives* and *maiores* suggest that there were fixed groups tangible in medieval urban everyday life. They can be further differentiated, however, based on distinctions contained in the sources.

Mayor and City Council

> We twidracht maket twisschen der herschop vnde der stad, twisschen dem rade vnde den gilden, edder twisschen dem rade vnde der meynheyt, syn liff vnde syn gut stet in des rades wolt.[27]
>
> [The life and the goods of anyone who causes mischief between the rulers and the town, between the council and the guilds or between the council and the community are in the power of the council.]

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[26] "Welk unser borgere ghesmyde dragen wel [. . .] de schal sek vnde der stad to gude kopen vnde holden eyn perd van viff marken edder beter, vnde so mochte syn husffruwe draghen alszodanne kledere vnde ghesmyde [. . .] vnde des van syner weghene ghebruken de wyle he dat perd helde [. . .] Welke vnser borghere syn gud vorschotede benedden hundert marken, syner husffruwen beste rok en scholde nicht kosten mer wenne dre mark. Welk vnser borgher ok syn gud nicht en vorschotede bouen drittech mark, syner husffruwen beste rok en scholde nicht mer kosten wenne twe mark. Wedewen de vnser borgherschen syn [. . .] by deme suluen broke." *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Braunschweig vol. 1: Statute und Rechtebriefe MCCCXXI–MCCCXL*. Ed. by Ludwig Hänselmann and Heinrich Mack. Osnabrück: Wenner, 1975 [1873], LXII, Echteding, 138–139.

[27] Ibid., 128.

The city council is the point of reference for all legal sources from late medieval towns. The council made decisions, the council demanded vows of loyalty, the council pledged loyalty and the council elected the mayors. As is indicated in the above quotation from the Braunschweig *Echteding* from 1444, the council was the counterpart of different juridical entities in the town: the guilds, the community in general and the town in general. The city council is, plainly stated, the boss. In the sources, the council is usually presented as a collective body with little focus on individual representatives (*ratmannen*), as if it was a unified body, which was rarely the case in practice. Different interests among the members of the council led to shifting alliances and conflicting policies. As in all Germanic legal sources, binomials are used in order to describe both the units and distinctions existing within the urban sphere: the council and the guilds, the council and the community. Binomials are also used for the different units of urban authority, the occurrence of *vor rade edder gerichte* [before the council or the court] or *rad unde borgere* [the council and burghers];[28] for example, the first indicating the two entities of urban secular law, and the second the entire urban community of free and righteous men divided into those who make the decisions and those who don't.

The mayor—or the mayors, as in some towns several were elected and served simultaneously—only rarely appears in normative sources, for example, as the decision maker who enjoins people to defend the town[29]—here the *burmester* represents the executive committee of the city council. A disproportionately large number of town laws specify the council itself as the institution to which various problems are to be reported, and which makes decisions about taxes, policing and a range of public order issues.

Access to city council, and as such to immediate political influence, was regulated differently in the different Hanseatic towns. In Cologne, the principle of cooptation of members led to an extremely exclusive group until the fourteenth century, and even after that access to the council was determined by the vote of those who were already members. For more than two hundred years a relatively consistent group of fifteen families

[28] *Das kundige bok 2*. Ed. by Malte Rehbein. Göttingen: Stadtarchiv, 2010, Dieberei, 9. Nov. 1488.

[29] "Weme ock de burmester buth uppe de wachte edder vor dat dore, de schall dar sulvest up unde vore ghan edder eynen andern, de so gud sy alse he sulvest unde neyne kindere noch myßlicke edder unrustige lude dar hin schicken." *Das kundige bok* 2, Feste und Klosterfahrten [1472–1497].

can be seen to have dominated urban administration.[30] In Lübeck, on the other hand, there was a greater degree of social mobility, and there were examples of people who had recently immigrated from Westphalia or the Baltic countries who, after marrying the daughter of a council member, were hastily integrated into city council.[31]

Tensions between the city council and the rest of the population often arose when the members of the council no longer had the economic means to fulfill their duties (*Abkömmlichkeit*), while others who had the necessary means were being excluded from the council. The distance separating council from the population, expressed in a pejorative attitude of the council towards the masses, also decreased acceptance of the council politics: financial measures taken in times of economic hardship were sources of rebellion, for example in Hamburg in 1483, in Lübeck in 1403 and in Braunschweig in 1374, 1455 and 1488.[32] Nonetheless, mayors' salaries were not standardized in the region until the early sixteenth century, with this standardization leading to a fundamental shift in the nature of political administration. The exclusion of other social groups from the city council manifested itself not only in various social activities such as the confraternities and the balls and feasts belonging to those corporations, but also in the rules applied to council members concerning their means of earning money. In Hamburg, for example, it was forbidden for council members (*ratlude*) to brew beer, an otherwise extremely popular activity and subject to an unbelievably complex and constant stream of regulations.[33]

The city council's authority as an institution was not called into question; the conflicts centered on who was permitted to participate in this institution. Lay didactical literature formulates an abundance of rules and admonitions aimed at this administrative and political elite, bearing comparison to the Mirrors of Princes, and establishing the virtues required to be a just and righteous *amtmann*. However, the question of what qualifications these people should have was never addressed—a formal education was not, in any case, compulsory for the political elite in the Hanseatic towns and, since wealth and family ties were important factors and council procedures often implied waiting periods and rotational elections, the

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[30] Herborn,"Professionalisierung," 32.
[31] Graßmann, "Sozialer Aufstieg," 106.
[32] Ehlers, "Hermen Bote," 125.
[33] *Hamburgische Burspraken: 1346–1594; mit Nachträgen bis 1699.* Ed. by Jürgen Bolland. Hamburg: Christian, 1960, 57; 43.

professionalization of this group based on a required education to control and secure access was not really an option.[34] Most of the political functionaries came from the merchant class, and their duties required a basic education in German reading and writing, mathematics and accounting, as well as in administration, quite apart from their political activities. For those who were active or had been active in long-distance trade—those who had traveled the routes to Sweden, Novgorod and Flanders were held in particularly high esteem—bilingualism or multilingualism, including a basic knowledge of Latin, could be assumed.

The city council and the eligible families were not synonymous with the urban upper class in all of the towns. Lübeck, for example, was quite famous for its relatively widespread economic upper class, having about 120–150 households and 40–50 families whose male members rotated the seats in the city council, although only a small percentage of them took part in the exclusive social circles and confraternities.

The city council was an entirely male group. Their wives and children shared their privileges based on a gender-specific access to status—they shared the wealth, the wife shared the status with its concomitant social restrictions and the children shared the education. In many towns, the daughters were educated in women's monasteries, which often had close ties to the political elite: the Cistercian monastery in Harvestehude, close to Hamburg, is an example.[35] These institutions often had an important position in the town's power structure, deriving, as did the council's influence, from wealth, status, education and prestige. This did not, however, result in institutionalized power. A woman exercising direct political influence was out of the question.

City Administration and Judges

In the oldest Lübeck town law, judges are counted among the ranks of the city council as those responsible for judicial decisions based on town law.[36] Judges, town reeves and the council itself each usually received one third of all fines levied by the town courts: in this context, the terms

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[34] Herborn, "Professionalisierung," 47.

[35] Cf. Heß, Cordelia. "Skirts and Politics. The Cistercian Monastery of Harvestehude and the Hamburg City Council." *Medieval Feminist Forum* 47, no. 2 (2011).

[36] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht von Lübeck nach seinen ältesten Formen.* Ed. by Gustav Korlén. Lund: Gleerup, 1951, 31.

"city council", "administration" and "town" (*de stad*) are often used interchangeably.[37] In the town legal texts, the city council is closely associated with the judges, a group that did not undergo professionalization and a collective increase in status until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[38] Advancement into the administrative groups of the medieval Hanseatic towns relied less on family ties and more on administrative skills and education. Town scribes were occasionally among the ranks of the early humanists—for example, the author Hermann Bote from Braunschweig—and often played a role in the uprisings and revolts, most often siding with the council and disapproving of the dissidents.

In semantic terms, the line between city council and the rest of the population was pronounced, as the town laws show, but the administrative staff was not as thoroughly distinct from craftspeople, guards and other professionals who worked directly for the city council and were directly responsible to them. A list of forms of oaths to be sworn before the city council in Braunschweig in the second half of the fifteenth century indicates this, containing templates for different administrative bodies and professions, and clearly not following any particular hierarchy in the sequence in which the templates are presented:

der amer (the gauger)[39]
de teygelmeyster (the master bricklayer)
de tepper (*ducillator*)
borgermestere to kesende (the city council swears to elect three mayors)
wechter (the six guards in the old town)
apoteker (the pharmacist, with his wife and his servants)
des docters in der artzedie (the physicians)
Doctoris juramentum (lawyers)
De tuchnisse vor dem rade (the witnesses who testify in front of the council)
de dorwerder (the gatekeepers)
de bruwereed (the oath of the brewers)
de smecker (the beer tasters)
de molre (the millers)[40]

Another collection, dated 1488 and potentially used as a supplement to the former list, contains additional oaths for:

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[37] Ibid., 71; 95; 110.
[38] Wensky, "Städtische Führungsschichten," 27.
[39] In this and the following quote, the forms of oaths are left out and only the denominations of those obliged to swear oaths are quoted. The parentheses contain a translation of the denomination.
[40] *UB Braunschweig*, vol. 1, CXIII, Eide, 261–265.

Novi consulatus et adjuratorum electa novis consulibus (new members of the council swear not to decide anything without the five mayors)
Vorstendere der hospitale (the directors of the hospitals swear to fulfill the duties of the office entrusted to them by the council)
De denere [. . .] dat gij dem rade, den XXIIIJ mannen, ghilden vnde ghildemesteren, houetluden vnde der gantzen meynheyt der stad to Brunswik denen (the servants swear to obey the twenty-four men, the guilds and guild masters, the captains and the entire community of the town of Braunschweig)
De ampten [. . .] dat gij dat ampt vnde denst dar gij to geschicket sin vamme rade vnde XXIIIJ mannen etc. (the bailiffs swear that they will fulfill the offices that they are assigned by the twenty-four men, etc.)[41]

This list suggests that loyalty to the city council, rather than education, academic degrees or ties to the council, was the most important factor in determining who held the professional positions particularly necessary to the town's community. Medical doctors, pharmacists and lawyers, as highly trained and educated groups, were not in this regard different from guards and messengers: they all had to swear oaths of allegiance and loyalty. Here again the city council, on the one hand, and the community, on the other, are the elements that determine the town's order, with the guilds and guild masters providing an additional force for order and obedience—the mention of the twenty-four men is a result of the last of the *Braunschweiger Schichten*, the late medieval urban uprisings. *Ludeke Hollants Schicht* had led to a concentration of power in the committee of the twenty-four, a situation that only lasted for a short time before dominance was regained by the city council in 1488.

In the case of the administrative staff, another group that has been of significant interest because of its central function in urban power relations as well as its members' level of education and degree of social mobility, it barely warrants its own terminology in the legal sources. The same is true for the merchants.

Merchants

The merchants as a group dominate the modern image of the Hanseatic towns. The Hanseatic League and its expansion, organization and power relations are still the source of lively debate in academic scholarship, although the topic has become an almost entirely German one. All of the towns in the Middle Low German region that were important for book

[41] Ibid., CX, Eide, 250–251.

production were members of the Hanseatic League, a mercantile organization which, by the fifteenth century, had already passed its pinnacle of power and growth. Those towns that were not free imperial cities—Hamburg, Braunschweig and Rostock—had to struggle with their noble sovereigns in order to maintain their privileges and freedoms, and the Hanseatic League generally tried to remain aloof from these conflicts, with regional alliances taking over.[42] The demand that the Braunschweig town scribe Hermann Bote makes of the emperor in his *Boek van veleme rade*, that a strong central imperial power be created in order to protect the towns and their trading zones from the regional landlords, reflects the dangers territorial states posed to trading and the threat they thereby posed to the Hanseatic League.[43]

The Hanseatic League remained an important framework for the towns regarding external relations and the related legislation, and within the towns the rules for the social ranking of the merchants were basically uniform throughout the Hanseatic League. Those who used certain routes for the long-distance trade of specific goods (cloth from Flanders, fur from Sweden and Novgorod) were socially and economically superior to those who used less prestigious routes to trade in less profitable goods and those who only traded locally.[44]

The economic and political influence ascribed to merchants as a group is not reflected in normative and legal sources. In the town laws, the merchants are not defined as an independent group. They are either classified with burghers in general—for example, in the luxury regulations—or trading is not perceived as a specific profession but as something many professionals engage in: merchants, craftsmen, peasants at the markets and so on. Consequently, *kopenschop* [commodity] and *kopen/vorkopen* [buying/selling] are frequently used terms in various areas of regulation, but not in connection with a specific group of people, as such regulations concern both long-distance traders and local traders, both citizens and visitors.[45]

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[42] Puhle, Matthias. "Die Stellung des Landes zwischen Harz und Heide im Hanseraum. Städtische Bündnispolitik im 13. Jahrhundert." In *Die Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Braunschweigischen Landes vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. Ed. by Claudia Märtl et al., 338–357. Hildesheim: Olms, 2008, ibid., 355.

[43] Bollenbeck, Georg. "Hermann Bote—die Spannung zwischen lebensgeschichtlicher Realität und Umweltkonzept als eine Grundmotivation des Schreibens." In Blume/Rohse, eds. *Hermann Bote*, 57–67, ibid., 61.

[44] Wensky, "Städtische Führungsschichten," 21.

[45] Göttingen town law, Kiel town law, and Hamburg Burspraken do not contain the term *koplude*. *Kopenschop* appears in connection to the Schoß taxes. *Das kundige bok* 2, Schoss, 23. Okt. 1468.

The forms of and options for the professional organization of men and women differed from town to town. Cologne was particularly known for its female guilds, with the prominent example being the silk weavers' guild. Many of the female weavers' husbands worked in long-distance trade, and the prestige of their position is reflected in their political influence: in the Late Middle Ages, about 30 percent of the women in the Cologne silk weavers' guild belonged to families eligible to sit on the city council. But belonging to the guild was not an automatic indication of a certain social status—many other women in this guild were impoverished.[46] The non-professional but socially important and exclusive confraternities also successively opened up to female membership; for example, the Greverardenkompanie in Lübeck, which listed the names of the affiliated sisters from 1505 onward.[47] In Hamburg and Bremen, the wives of merchants were excluded from the general rules governing marital guardianship, and were thus able to pursue a certain range of professional activities, and widows were allowed to continue their husband's trading businesses as independent entrepreneurs. The relative independence of women regarding their occupations and financial affairs was not limited to the merchants' wives, but encompassed their entire household. Even unmarried daughters were permitted to participate in their father's trading companies and have their own paid positions there.[48]

In other towns such as Braunschweig, female professional organization is less documented or was simply not permitted. Only as widows could women occasionally carry on their husband's affairs; however, it was more common for the business to be handed over to a male ombudsman.

During the fourteenth century, the Hanseatic long-distance trader had made the transition from a traveler to an office worker who managed the goods from his hometown or another town on the Baltic or North Sea. Those who actively worked, either traveling or living abroad, were not simultaneously active as political representatives for their town, except in the case of those who attended the annual meetings of the

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46 Wensky, "Städtische Führungsschichten," 22.

47 Graßmann, Antjekathrin. "Die Greveradenkompanie. Zu den führenden Kaufleutegesellschaften in Lübeck um die Wende zum 16. Jahrhundert." In *Der hansische Sonderweg? Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hanse*. Ed. by Stuart Jenks and Michael North, 109–134. Köln: Böhlau, 1993, ibid., 134.

48 These facts are known from private wills from Hamburg and Lübeck. Among the preserved wills from these towns, one-fifth were issued by women. The normative sources from guilds and confraternities to some degree tell different stories. Loose, Hans-Dieter. "Die Erwerbstätigkeit der Frau im Spiegel Lübecker und Hamburger Testamente des 14. Jahrhunderts." *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 60 (1980).

Hanseatic League. The position of the merchants on the social ladder was below the traditional and long-established council families, but there was a lot of room for advancement, usually on the basis of professional merit or through marriage. The German-speaking merchant Hildebrand Veckinghusen, who sent more than five hundred letters from his main worksite, the Hanseatic office in Bruges, to family, friends and business associates in the German lands, is a prominent example. Coming from an unknown family, possibly from one of the Baltic Hanseatic towns, Hildebrand and his brother were educated as merchant's assistants in Riga. Hildebrand then rapidly advanced to the position of alderman in Bruges with the help of his marriage to the daughter of a Dortmund mayor.

None of this—the social mobility of merchants, their importance for the Hanseatic town's economy and external affairs, and the dominant position merchant families held in the social life of the towns—was represented in the normative and legal sources. The *koplude* were significant for religious instruction and for Hanseatic affairs, but in the town laws and luxury regulations, they only appeared as local market attendants alongside small chandlers and foreigners, whose businesses fell under the same regulations.

Craftsmen

In Ahasver von Brandt's analysis of the Lübeck tax registries, most craftspeople are included in the third of four social groups, which makes up 35.4 percent of the total population.[49] Craftsmen and different crafts were the subject of urban regulations in many of the normative sources. Their clothing and their rights and obligations concerning the bearing of arms and military service are expressed through the twin formula of *gilden unde hantwerck* [guilds and crafts] or the triple formula *gilden, hantwerch and gemeynheyd mestere* [guilds, crafts and masters of crafts in general].[50] In this context, the *gildemester* appear as the highest representatives of a certain segment of society. In all the regulations not concerning individual crafts but rather the entire group of craftspeople, the guild is the point of reference, and the guilds in toto constitute the social group. In some cases, the highest representatives, the masters, are addressed in the place of the guilds themselves and fulfill the same function, that of a legal

[49] Brandt, "Gesellschaftliche Struktur," 221.
[50] *Das kundige bok*, Opfergeld, [nach 1472]:3; 22. Oct. 1497; 6. Nov. 1468; etc.

unit. If it is not the craftspeople or the guilds in toto that are intended as a juridical person, then the regulations are not addressed to the guild, but to a profession such as *de brewere*—the brewers—who in the Hanseatic towns were subject to numerous regulations.

The craftsmen's guilds formed vertical strata within urban society. Their masters often belonged to the upper middle class and were frequently mentioned as negotiating partners of the city council. Journeymen and apprentices, on the other hand, were often struggling for financial independence from their masters and for the opportunity to found a household of their own. In the case of craftsmen's households, the entire family was treated as a unit regarding membership in a guild, and thereby with regard to the legal framework for the practice of a profession. As with merchants, there were social distinctions among craftsmen: first, those based on the hierarchy within the professional organization such as masters, journeymen and apprentices, then those that existed between the various crafts—those who worked with precious and expensive materials were considered superior to those who did not, with the lowest being those engaged in the smelly and dangerous professions, such as tanners. Goldsmiths, coin makers, jewelers and furriers could gain eligibility for the city council, at least if they belonged to the upper echelons of their guild. But generally, the elite mercantile groups tried to erect social and political boundaries against the craftsmen, and these were the source of many of the conflicts and uprisings in late medieval towns such as in Hamburg, for example, where the brewers tried to overthrow the council after several years of famine and inflation in protest against the council's financial mismanagement.

Despite the numerous uprisings and revolts of upper and lower craftsmen and their guilds in an effort to either establish a governmental institution separate from the city council or to secure access to the existing council, in no town in the Baltic Sea region did these efforts lead to any long-term change to the mercantile and exclusive character of the city governments.[51] As for education, it must be assumed that craftsmen could to some extent read and write, and that there were schools where

[51] Only in Braunschweig did the *Schicht* of 1386 lead to a change in the composition of the city council: sixteen seats were retained by the mercantile families that had previously controlled them all, and fourteen passed into the hands of members of the more highly ranked and more respected craft guilds. Märtl, "Braunschweig," 367.

teaching occurred entirely in the vernacular, or that they were taught by their parents and masters.[52]

High Nobility—Emperor, King

The relations with the emperor and the king differed from town to town. Some towns, such as Lübeck, were *reichsunmittelbar*, and therefore had no sovereign other than the emperor (or, in periods when there was no emperor, the king): others, like Magdeburg, were under the formal control of an archbishop, but in practice exercised communal self-governance. Braunschweig received independent status in 1432, when the Dukes of Braunschweig moved their residence to nearby Wolfenbüttel. Cologne was declared an imperial city in 1473, but had been governed more or less independently from the archbishop since the thirteenth century. Rostock was governed by the Duke of Mecklenburg, but achieved privileges of coinage and jurisdiction during the fourteenth century. Consequently, for most of the cities that were centers for book production in the Middle Low German region, the emperor was the only juridical and authoritative figure above the city council.

Representations of the king and the emperor differ substantially in different types of sources: they appear at the top of the social ladder, but have limited importance in daily urban life. The book of formulas for letters, which includes separate chapters specific to secular and ecclesiastical rulers, opens with the forms of address to be used in letters to the emperor, *deme rommisschen keyser*, and to a king, *eynem konynge*.[53] Imperial law is represented in the normative sources, but the emperor as a person isn't. *Dat keyserlike rechte* and *koninklike rechte* are common expressions that are used interchangeably in contrast to local urban law and canon law.[54] In religious texts, on the other hand, *keyser* is often synonymous with God, especially when referring to the Virgin Mary as *des keysers vrouwe*, the emperor's wife:[55] this, however, is never mirrored in legal sources.

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[52] Giesecke, Michael. "'Volkssprache' und 'Verschriftlichung des Lebens' im Spätmittelalter." In *Literatur in der Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters*. Ed. by Hans U. Gumbrecht, 39–70. Heidelberg: Winter, 1980, ibid., 41.

[53] Formulare/Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal, fol. 1v.

[54] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 206; 207; 20.

[55] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch II*, 438–439.

The infrequent mentions of the emperor or the imperial level of political power or influence in the urban sources suggests a limited importance for imperial politics in urban daily life. The emperor is more of a symbol of a higher political unity and identity than a real person, and furthermore there are very few points of contact between the emperor and the urban legal sphere in the sources that address this—or with the king, who almost seems to be a semantic adjunct to the emperor.

Lower Nobility

Who belonged to the lower nobility? This question has been hotly debated with regard to the southern German centers of courtly life,[56] and, in the case of the north, there is even more room for debate. According to the book of letter formulas, *hertogen, marckgreuen, lantgreuen, lantherren, slychte greue, rydder, hoffmannen edder eddelman, gesellen edder knechte* [dukes, margraves, landgraves, territorial princes, lower counts, knights, courtiers or noble men, company or servants] make up the nobility;[57] a vertical stratification of the nobility, including its servants, that is clearly distinguished from the urban hierarchies and strata. But noble families were of small importance in the Hanseatic towns. Hamburg and Rostock had sovereigns from local noble families—the dukes of Mecklenburg and the dukes of Schauenburg and Holstein—but the town administrations had gained considerable privileges during the fourteenth century and were governed more or less independently during the Late Middle Ages. During the fifteenth century, the sovereigns increasingly attempted to regain control of the independent cities. Military resistance against these efforts was largely unsuccessful in the eastern part of Lower Saxony, while in the western part, Braunschweig was the only town to successfully defeat the duke.[58]

The absence of residences and courts in the north of the Empire led to a general lack of importance for courtly culture and for the nobility as

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[56] Morsel, Joseph. "Inventing a Social Category. The Sociogenesis of the Nobility at the End of the Middle Ages." In Jussen/Selwyn, eds. *Ordering medieval society*, 200–239.

[57] Formulare/Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal, fol. 2r–3r.

[58] Bei der Wieden, Brage. "Die Formierung des norddeutschen Niederadels." In *Herrschaftspraxis und soziale Ordnungen im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: Ernst Schubert zum Gedenken*. Ed. by Peter Aufgebauer and Christine van den Heuvel, 311–329. Hannover: Hahn, 2006.

a politically important and distinctive group. The geographical position between the Scandinavian and the southern German centers of courtly culture, the strong peasant republics and the independence of the Hanseatic towns were all factors contributing to the limited political and economic importance of the northern German nobility.[59] These relations correspond to the representation in the urban sources, which present very little evidence of a lower nobility. In the Hamburg *Burspraken*, the sovereign is mentioned only occasionally, for example in 1462 along with the Danish King Christian, regarding measures taken to deter the circulation of forged money.[60] Lübeck town law forbids a burgher to sell his bequest to a knight (*riddere*), as well as to clerics and foreigners.[61] Other potential terms for nobles—*gudemannen, eddele, juncker*—do not appear in the text.

The influence of courtly culture on urban culture has been presented as a hostile takeover by literary scholars.[62] But, given the personal connections between the rural nobility and the urban upper class, the line separating courtly and urban cultures seems blurry at best. Marriage into the rural nobility was a proven strategy of *homines novi* for joining the urban upper class, and impoverished noble families, such as the Greverarden, could make a new fortune as urban merchants, and thereby participate in urban forms of power and representation. The Greverarden family had sent a son to Lübeck for an education and for service. He became a long-distance trader with Sweden and founded the most prestigious merchant's company in Lübeck.[63] The company maintained courtly traditions in an atmosphere controlled by the urban patriciate. Generally, courtly culture had an air of power and sophistication, and the burghers happily adopted aspects of it. For example, tournaments partly paid for by the city council took place within the town walls of Lübeck, Schwerin, Kiel and Stockholm.[64]

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[59] Paravicini, Werner. "Rittertum im Norden des Reichs." In Paravicini/Jordan, eds. *Nord und Süd*, 147–191.

[60] *Hamburgische Burspraken*, 50,4.

[61] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 234.

[62] "Die Abwehrkräfte des städtischen Kulturraums waren zu schwach, um das mehr oder weniger verdeckte Einströmen von Relikten der höfischen Kultur unterbinden zu können." Krohn, Rüdiger. "Städtische Literatur zur Zeit Hermen Botes." In Schöttker/Wunderlich, eds. *Hermen Bote*, 69–96, ibid., 76.

[63] Graßmann, "Greveradenkompanie," 116.

[64] Paravicini, "Rittertum," 161.

Even though the nobility did not have significant political or economic power, courtly culture played a significant role in establishing social distinctions in the urban sphere, indicating a general connection between nobility and power in the perception of the urban upper classes even though the nobility throughout the German lands was struggling with a loss of identity and the deterioration of a presumed connection between noble birth and superior morals (*Tugendadel*).[65] The strategy of adopting a noble culture, or at least elements of it, was visible among the urban upper classes, as were various strategies for excluding nobles from actual power relations and property acquisition within the town walls. *Forsten*—dukes, lords—became the objects of several prohibitions in town laws, such as bans on selling property to them or making loans to them from the city budget. The formula for this is *forsten und heren, ghestlik oder werlic*[66]—dukes and lords, secular or clerical. The connection between the nobility and the clergy as social groups perceived as foreign to the urban population is thereby spelled out, and both of these semantically and clearly distinguishable groups appear in the towns' normative and pragmatic sources.

Clergy

The clergy was a numerically significant group in all late medieval towns, and was conceived of as a closed status group in legal sources, even if it is surprisingly infrequently mentioned, considering its sheer numbers and extensive privileges. In Braunschweig, for example, there were seven parish churches, each having a priest and several clerics who lived on the church's benefices—their number sometimes rose as high as forty. Additionally, there were over forty canons, as well as the members of four monasteries, three male and one female. In Hamburg, shortly before the Reformation, one out of every thirty inhabitants was a cleric.[67]

A distinction between monastic orders and secular clergy is not clear in all cases, and the Middle Low German terminology does not always allow for a distinction between the clergy as a group of people with a distinct

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[65] Honemann, Volker. "Aspekte des 'Tugendadels' im europäischen Spätmittelalter." In Grenzmann/Stackmann, eds. *Literatur und Laienbildung*, 274–286, ibid., 238.

[66] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 250.

[67] Reincke, Heinrich. *Hamburg am Vorabend der Reformation.* Hamburg: Wittig, 1966, 58.

social status and the clergy as a spiritual state of mind. In chronicles and Bible commentaries, the Middle Low German *geistlichkeyt* is used for the Latin terms *religio, religiositas,* and *spiritualitas*. In the Lübeck town law, *geistlick* appears mostly as the opposite of *wertlick*, secular, or in the expression *gestlicke lůde*—spiritual/ecclesiastical people—here meaning a certain legal status.[68] Göttingen town laws mention only the *prestere*, the secular priest, for example, in the regulations concerning such family feasts as a child's first mass,[69] but no monks or members of the upper clergy are mentioned anywhere in the text.

This does not mean that no differentiated vocabulary existed in the vernacular for different religious grades and orders. The letter formulas extensively list both male and female members of the clergy: "Pope, cardinal, bishop, a bishop who is a prince-elector, a simple bishop, a prince-abbot, an abbot, an entire chapter, a canon, a doctor, a master of Scripture, a student, a chaplain, a prior, an abbess, a nun, a religious woman."[70] The inclusion of women in this list does not mean much about the inclusion of women in the clerical order on a legal level: it represents vertical strata of respectability in which the female clergy occupy a position between the male clergy and well-off urban laywomen. Whether monastic women in general were counted as part of the clergy is not directly addressed in the sources. The term *ghestlike lude* is gender neutral, and since there are no elements for distinguishing clergy from laity in these sources—ordination, reclusion, habit—there seems to be an overall implicit notion about who belongs to this order and who does not.

The legal texts usually call both secular clergy and members of monastic orders *papen* or *pfaffen*. The articles connected to them serve to establish boundaries between secular and clerical spheres of jurisdiction, property and governance. Mutual respect for these boundaries is crucial to both sides: laypeople are not supposed to engage in the business of ecclesiastical institutions and vice versa.[71] In Hamburg, the *Burspraken* hardly ever

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[68] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 251. The article forbids the expansion or change of any clerical house within the town walls beyond their status quo in 1247.

[69] *Das kundige bok*, Feste und Klosterfahrten, 6. Nov. 1468.

[70] "Pawest, Cardinal, Bysschoppe, eyn bysschoppe de ein kurfurste is, eyn slycht bysschoppe, eynem gefursten Abbet, eynem Abbet, eynem ganczen capittel, eynem domheren, eynem Parner edder Doctor, eynem meyster der hilgen scrygfft, eynem studenten, eynem capellan, eynem Prior, eyner Abbedissen, eyner clostervrouwen, eyner betsuster." Formulare/Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal, fol. 4r–6v.

[71] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 212. The paragraph prohibits the mistreatment of a cleric by a layperson and vice versa. No. 234 prohibits the same sales and heritages to clerics as to nobles.

mention clerical people: only two rules regarding the use of the town's mills for clerics are included. One of them uses the opposition *ghestlik unde wertlik* in order to manifest the rule's general parameters, and the other one forbids clerics from giving flour they have had milled in Hamburg's mills to other people, in order to respect certain quotas.[72] A similar principle applied in Braunschweig, where the city council tried to restrict the amount of land that clerical institutions owned within the town by forbidding the willing of land by laypeople to clerical institutions. Land that had been willed away despite this regulation was to be returned to the city within a year.[73]

The terminology used in Middle Low German legal and normative sources for the clergy shows the need to distinguish them from the laity, but not to describe internal clerical distinctions and grades, although the terminology for these exists. However, even the clergy-laity boundary seems to be fairly self-evident, as no explanation about who belongs to either group is offered. That does not necessarily mean that this boundary was not open to discussion, but it certainly was not an issue in the urban legal sources, which addressed a sphere of living and a legal sphere for laypeople.

Semi-Religious Groups

Semi-religious groups, such as Beguines, houses of the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, tertiaries and other less regulated religious houses and communities do not play a significant role in the Middle Low German didactical literature, but this might partly be due to the fact that there is a lack of distinct terminology for referring to them. Several of the texts addressing monastic life and regulations could also be read as directed at semi-religious people living under a rule in a community, without having taken formal monastic vows. There were houses of the Brethren of the Common Life in Cologne, Magdeburg, Rostock, Münster and Hildesheim (not a Hanseatic town), as well as several other northern towns, but not in Lübeck or Hamburg. However, by the thirteenth century, Lübeck city law already included *godeshuse*, both secular and clerical institutions that were supposed to receive the same protection.[74] This

[72] *Hamburgische Burspraken* 41,2 and 41,7 (1459).
[73] Märtl, "Braunschweig," 381.
[74] *Das mittelniederdeutsche Stadtrecht*, 227.

obviously refers to both regular monastic houses and semi-religious communities. Connected with the difficulty of finding specific terminology for semi-religious people in the sources is the difficulty of finding and defining specific forms of female religiosity in general. Beguines, for example, are not mentioned, nor are the female recluses who occasionally had cells close to or in urban churches. The *betsuster*—praying Sister—referred to in the letter formulas and situated at the very bottom of the clerical hierarchy, points to the existence of a terminology for non-monastic communities and their inhabitants.[75] Considering the great impact that the *Devotio moderna* and specifically female forms of sanctity had on lay piety in general,[76] these groups are definitely underrepresented in the sources from the urban sphere.

Foreigners, Inhabitants and Citizens

The status of citizenship and residency was one of the basic legal divisions between people in the towns, and all town laws contained regulations and prices for the acquisition of citizenship.[77] A special emphasis on gendered expressions is shown by the twin formula *borgere edder inwoner, borgerssche edder inwonerssche* [citizen or inhabitant, female citizen or inhabitant], which appears both in the Hamburg and the Göttingen town laws[78] and is meant to emphasize that the entire town population is a legal unit. In Lübeck, the non-citizens and, thereby, the lowest social group, constituted the largest group of taxpayers in the second half of the fifteenth century, making up 41.8 percent of the total population.[79]

Numerous regulations and town laws tried to demarcate citizens from the populations of other towns and of the countryside: for example, the Hamburg *Bursprake* stated that citizens were not allowed to hold legacies and inheritances in other towns in common with their brothers and sisters, but were obliged to sever such financial and professional ties. From the opposite perspective, the purchase of property and houses within the

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[75] The pejorative notion the word *Betschwester* has in modern German can be post-Reformatory; its use in the medieval text does not contain a valuation.

[76] van Engen, John H. *Sisters and brothers of the common life: The Devotio Moderna and the world of the later Middle Ages.* Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, reconstructs this for the convents in the Low Countries.

[77] "We de burschop ffreueliken vpgifft ane nod [...] we na disser tijd vnser borgher werd [...]" *UB Braunschweig*, vol. 1, LXII, Echteding, 1444, 130.

[78] *Das kundige bok 2*, Schoss, [1468–1473]; *Hamburgische Burspraken* 69,51.

[79] Brandt, "Gesellschaftliche Struktur," 216.

town walls was made difficult for non-citizens, including the rural nobility. Hamburg town laws made a distinction between *erfbesetene mannen* (those who owned property within the town's jurisdiction), *unbesetene mannen* (those who were under the town's jurisdiction, but owned neither a house nor land), *gast* (a resident of another town who was temporarily visiting) and *loßgeselle* (people who did not belong to any guild).[80] The law in question, a total prohibition on dice games, applied to all of them, but the punishments differed: propertied inhabitants were to pay ten *mark pfennig*. Members of the other three groups caught playing dice games were expelled from the town for a full year.[81] On the other hand, those who came to town in order to trade goods and take part in the markets were classified as welcome visitors: accordingly, they were not referred to as *unbeseten* in the sources, but as guests.[82]

Citizenship was also the point of reference for the regulation of households regarding the status and work conditions of servants. Braunschweig citizens were not permitted to employ either male or female servants who had left their former employer's service without receiving his consent.[83] It is worth noting that in many of the regulations the formula *borghere unde borgersche* emphasizes the citizenship of both genders and their respective rights.[84]

Jews

> De jodden de hir wonafftich syn hefft de rad in ore bescherminghe nomen. Dar schal sek malk ane vorwaren, dat he sek an one nycht en vorgripe.[85]
>
> [The Jews who live here are under the protection of the council. So everybody shall be wary of harming them.]

This quotation is found in Braunschweig town law in 1444. Sixty years later, all Jews were expelled from the town, but they already returned

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80 *DRW online*, article "Losgeselle 2".

81 *Hamburgische Burspraken*, 72,1 and 72,2, 1481.

82 "Ok mach hir ghast myt ghaste wol kopslagen ane broke myt allerhande kopmanschop […] de wyle dyt dem rade behaghed." *UB Braunschweig*, vol. 1, LXII, Echteding, 140.

83 "Welk denstknecht edder maghet schalen oren heren edder orer ffruwen to bytyden vntghinghe vt orem brode ane oren willen, den en schal neyn vnse borgere edder borgersche bynnen dem neysten iare to denste in syn brod nemen." Ibid., 133.

84 "Neyn vnser borgher edder borgersche schal den anderen laden vor iennich recht […]" Ibid., 129.

85 Ibid., 131.

within six months. Braunschweig had a relatively stable and enduring Jewish community between the pogroms that followed the Black Death in the middle of the fourteenth century and their ultimate expulsion in 1546. Braunschweig also served as a refuge for Jews from Hildesheim and Goslar, who in 1414 and 1457 fled from their hometowns in response to increasing and ultimately unbearable levels of taxation imposed by the sovereigns. By the end of the fifteenth century there were individual letters of registration for Jews who moved into Braunschweig and were granted citizenship; in 1462, a treaty had been established between the richest members of the Jewish community and the city council, creating some privileges for rich Jews.[86] Jews made up 1–1.5 percent of the entire population of Braunschweig in the Late Middle Ages, until a 1510 expulsion diminished the Jewish community from more than seventeen families to only one family.[87] Communal policy occasionally underwent sudden shifts from an overall positive or tolerant attitude towards Jews to one supporting a pogrom and expulsion. Frequent mention is made of Jews in Braunschweig town laws and diploma whenever the *Judenregal* was to be sold or transferred: the terms used are *de ioden* and *de menen ioden* or, with some frequency, individual identifiable persons followed by *de iode*, usually arising in a textual relationship to a sovereign, either the landlord who is in possession of the *Judenregal* or the city council as the institution that signed treaties with the Jews.[88]

Although it was possible for Jews to receive citizenship in several towns and thereby to gain access to the legal community, they constituted a specific group that was, from the point of view of the Christians, only vaguely differentiated by wealth or gender. In the Middle Low German region, the presence of anti-Jewish resentment is a typical case of "anti-Semitism without Jews," since there were no Jews in most of the Hanseatic towns due to early settlement restrictions. In Lübeck, Rostock, Hamburg and Stendal, there were no traces of Jewish settlement in the Middle Ages, even though temporary and semi-pertinent settlement of traveling merchants can be assumed. Cologne and Braunschweig were the only towns in the Middle Low German region where Jewish communities settled

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[86] Ries, Rotraud. " 'De joden to verwisen.' Judenvertreibungen in Nordwestdeutschland im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert." In *Judenvertreibungen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Ed. by Friedhelm Burgard et al., 189–224. Hannover: Hahn, 1999, ibid., 194.

[87] Märtl, "Braunschweig," 398.

[88] Cf. the examples in Ebeling, Hans-Heinrich. *Die Juden in Braunschweig. Rechts-, Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte von den Anfängen der Jüdischen Gemeinde bis zur Emanzipation (1282–1848)*. Braunschweig: Stadtarchiv, 1987, 12–16.

and resettled following the various waves of pogroms in the Late Middle Ages. The regulations set by the diocesan synods in the south in the early fifteenth century such as the obligation to wear badges and other signs and the segregation of the settlement areas in the towns, were later also applied in the northern towns.[89]

Cologne is known to have had a Jewish community from the early eleventh century onward, with pogroms and expulsions occurring following the Black Death in the 1350s and again in 1424. In Cologne it was the archbishop, acting as the town's formal sovereign, who had maintained the *Judenregal*, even during the centuries after the town had purchased and gained almost all other urban privileges and more or less acted like a free imperial city.[90]

Policies regarding Jews differed in free imperial cities and in those towns that belonged to a noble territorial lord, where policy had to be shaped in accordance with his premises. However, guilds were usually the leading groups behind the expulsion of Jews in all of the towns, as professional organizations for which the economic advantages gained by eliminating a competing group that was unable to protect itself often outweighed the economic advantages that the city council gained from the Jews' settlement.[91]

Generally, there were fewer anti-Jewish pogroms and expulsions in the northwest of the Empire compared to the many events based on blood libel charges and other pro-pogrom propaganda in the south. But they were still far-reaching given the fact that Jewish settlements in this area were smaller and more recent, and the political estates had a greater degree of independence from the landlords and as a result had no direct competition with them, which had an impact on the potential for violence against Jews. As well, there are no records of aggressive anti-Jewish preaching by Minorite Brothers that would compare to John of Capestrano's popular sermons in the south.

The most prominent example is the 1494 Sternberg blood libel, which resulted in the deaths of twenty-two people at the stake and the expulsion of the Jews from the Mecklenburg County. Sternberg's status as a place for

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[89] Herzig, Arno. "Die Juden in Deutschland zur Zeit Reuchlins." In *Reuchlin und die Juden*. Ed. by Arno Herzig, 11–20. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1993, ibid., 15.

[90] Bardelle, Thomas, and Alfred Haverkamp. *Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter von der Nordsee bis zu den Südalpen: kommentiertes Kartenwerk. Vol. 2: Ortskatalog*. Hannover: Hahn, 2002, 183–184.

[91] Ries, "De ioden to verwisen," 213.

pilgrimages to the miraculous host was short-lived, becoming a target for Martin Luther's criticism of miracle-working hosts in 1524. It is unclear to what extent the inhabitants of the northern regions knew of and visited the blood libel sites in the south such as Rinn in Austria and Trient in Italy. A comparable case of blood libel on the southeastern border of the Middle Low German region involved the expulsion of the Jews from the Margraviate of Brandenburg in 1510, where, as was the case in Sternberg, local Jews were accused of having bought and desecrated a host. More than one hundred persons were brought to Berlin for a trial, and thirty-eight were burned at the stake.[92]

Jews turned up frequently in the religious literature intended for lay-people. The fact that they were less represented in the urban legal sources was the result of their specific legal status, which fell somewhere between secular and canon law. The two primary targets of anti-Jewish propaganda were the credit business and blood libel connected to the narrative of the Passion of Christ and Eucharist devotion. The criticism of the credit business was based on the scholastic definition of all forms of usurious gain, financial or in kind, made by lending money or objects, and on the constant propaganda of the Minorite Brothers in favor of a monetary system that functioned entirely without rent or interest, something that was extremely utopian in the centers of long-distance trade and the early capitalist economy. Overall, the role played by Jews (and *Lombards*, Italian immigrants who had dominated the monetary business in the High Middle Ages) in the credit business decreased during the fifteenth century, with much of the propaganda being directed equally against Jewish and Christian "usurers."

The collection of formulas, however, offers an example of a letter to a Jew: "Ick bidde dy du wollest des wokers haluen" [I beg you to cut the usury in half].[93] This form letter occupies a place at the lowest end of the secular stratum after craftsman, and comes before the Pope who marks the beginning of the ecclesiastical stratum. "To cut the usury in half " calls to mind the popular strategy for financing the Crusades: a double taxation

[92] This amounted to a comprehensive assault on the Jewish population of the rural areas and the towns of Stendal, Gardelegen, Salzwedel, Seehausen, Werben, Tangermünde, Havelberg, Kyritz, Pritzwalk, Perleberg, Lenzen, Brandenburg, Nauen and Cottbus. There were also several victims in nearby Braunschweig, and this was probably a prelude to the expulsion of the Jews from that town. Ebeling, *Juden in Braunschweig*, 22–23.

[93] Formulare/Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal, fol. 4r.

of the Jewish population, based on the argument that Jewish property was unrighteously amassed.[94]

The late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was a period during which the Jewish population in the Middle Low German region was the target of repeated pogroms and expulsions: for many communities, these were the final years of their existence in the northern German towns. In normative and legal sources, the Jews are a clearly demarcated and recognizable group assigned a certain legal status, despite their potential for buying citizenship, which was not, in any case, a guarantee of lasting protection. There is no evidence of any further differentiation of Jews on the basis of wealth, gender or profession, nor is their constantly threatened position within Christian urban society inscribed or denoted in the legal texts.

Conclusion

The normative and legal sources formulated lines of distinction between the different groups of the town population based on political power, legal status (including the different legal status of non-Christians), wealth and, to a minor degree, profession. The most prominent distinction was between the city council and the rest of the community. Within the community itself, the distinction between citizens, inhabitants and foreigners is very important, but there are also numerous attempts to describe the community in inclusive terms. As with most legal texts from the Germanic countries, the urban laws and sumptuary laws are full of twin or triple formulas describing the entire urban society or part of it. Göttingen town law concerning clothing regulations speaks of *man, geselle, junckfrůwe, frůwe, brud edder maget* [married man, unmarried man, virgin, wife, bride or servant].[95] Many articles in the Kiel *Burspraken* begin by addressing *heren, knapen, leyen, papen, uppe vrouwen unde up alle ghude lude* [lords, servants, laypeople, clerics, women and all good people].[96] In the twin formulas, distinctions between the genders are often made, indicating different statuses for men and women belonging to the same legal or social category. There is a notable lack of representation of the merchants in

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[94] Cluse, Christoph. "Zum Zusammenhang von Wuchervorwurf und Judenvertreibung im 13. Jahrhundert." In Burgard et al., *Judenvertreibungen*, 135–164, ibid., 144.

[95] *Das kundige bok* 2, Kleidung [nach 1497].

[96] *Die Kieler Burspraken.* Ed. by Hedwig Sievert. Kiel: Hirt, 1953. Text I, nach 1378, 173. Also text II, undated, 175. Text III, 1410, similarly, 178.

the sources, despite the undoubtedly high degree of influence they had on the upper classes' social and professional lives. The lack of distinction between academic education—which was still primarily the purview of the clergy—and other professions is also notable. When making distinctions between people, the basic dichotomy of the council—the rulers—and the community—the subordinates—is clearly a visible and a primary goal of the semantic representation.

Generally, the representation of social groups in the legal and normative sources from late medieval Hanseatic towns does not mirror either the number of such groups in the towns or the importance modern researchers have ascribed to some of the groups. The town scribes, the Hanseatic League, the semi-religious communities and distinctions between the clergy are all examples of important factors of medieval social and political life that are barely addressed in the legal sources. A differentiated terminology for them exists, however, and is used in more pragmatic texts such as the books containing letter formulas. The most striking rhetorical form used for urban society as a unit is the binomial or the combination of binomials, while tripartite divisions do not play any role at all.

This recalls the situation of certain metaphors for society, in particular discourses. The local, vernacular, legal and normative discourse is clearly dominated by oppositions and by terminology referring to a person's legal status or authority in the urban context. Tripartite moral and functional tropes are part of a learned Latin discourse. How these discourses influence the rhetorical forms for society in lay didactical literature will be investigated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

TRIPARTITIONS AND THEIR DISSOLUTION

III.1 *The Master Narrative: Functional and Moral Tripartitions*

Scholars of both medieval and early modern history have formulated assumptions concerning a prevalent model of society relevant for the Late Middle Ages; it is claimed that functional tripartition, or in any case some tripartite division of social groups, has been used over centuries in widely differing historical and social contexts.[1] Reformation studies have formulated this assumption based on a study of the Lutheran *Haustafel* and discussed the late medieval social order primarily with regard to its importance for Luther's concept of the three orders and their medieval origins.[2] The significant changes in political theory from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern era concerning the emergence of natural law, a public sphere and other factors considered crucial and specific for modernity have also been discussed with assumptions about the late medieval social order as a point of origin, always with "the three estates" as a major point of reference.[3] Thomas A. Brady begins a chapter of his study *German Histories in the Age of Reformations* with a short survey of the shifts in perception regarding the three estates between their earliest appearance and the late medieval criticism of the dissolution of the social order. In the opening vignettes, he nonetheless uses representatives of workers, fighters and praying people for his description of the social history of the empire before the Reformation.[4] Even scholars who are fully aware of the heterogeneity and pluralism of potential models for the medieval social order continue to allude to the dominance of tripartite divisions en passant, with the result that the image of society as consisting of three

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[1] The latest overview of research on the functional tripartition and models for social ordering in general is to be found in Behrendt, *Lehr-, Wehr- und Nährstand*, 26–31. For Carnival plays from the Reformation period, the evidence of the functional tripartition has been stated in Jørgensen, Ninna. *Bauer, Narr und Pfaffe: Prototypische Figuren und ihre Funktion in der Reformationsliteratur.* Leiden: Brill, 1988.

[2] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, passim; Schorn-Schütte, "Drei-Stände-Lehre," passim.

[3] Taylor, Charles. "Modern Social Imaginaries." *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002).

[4] Brady, Thomas A. *German histories in the age of Reformations, 1400–1650*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 29–68.

orders remains a rarely questioned master narrative of medieval and early modern studies.[5] Nonetheless, whether it was a medieval master narrative remains a pertinent question.

The number three is undoubtedly a popular mode of distinction and structure, well known from the *divisio tripartita* in sermons, for example.[6] However, the specific use of a tripartite division based on functional and/or moral qualities of the groups distinguished is very rare in lay didactical literature, and this has to be considered when assessing the prevalence of tripartite models for society in the Late Middle Ages. Considering the historical circumstances that these well-known models for formulating a social order occurred in, it is not surprising to find that they were not a consistent factor throughout the fifteenth century and that they did not play a role in every genre and in each area of discourse. Furthermore, it is impossible to clearly distinguish between pure functional and pure moral divisions; the categories are very rarely unadulterated or unmixed. The clergy, for example, can appear both as a functional and a moral category, and often the terminology of one division is used for the other.

When defining functional and moral definition as a trope, it is either a synecdoche or a metonymy, two categories which Nicolas Ruwet sees as connected through a gradual transition. A synecdoche is an expression in which a part of an entity (literal meaning) is used to describe the entity itself (figurative meaning). This definition is very broad, since almost everything is a part of something else, but the synecdoche does not work in every case. Nicolas Ruwet's questions are: what are the rules by which a certain part of the entity can be used as a figurative expression for the entity and what are the different effects this operation has in different discourses? In more general terms, it seems to be inevitable for the semantic functioning of the synecdoche that the source term and the target term exist in close relation to each other on the basis of a logical, ontological, temporal or cultural point of reference—the same is true for a metonymy. Additionally, the boundaries between a metonymic and a metaphorical understanding of a single rhetorical figure are not clearly defined, since often the source domain of the metonymy or synecdoche can be under-

[5] Jane Keller, for example, sees the functional tripartition as a never-questioned scheme for ordering society throughout the Middle Ages. Keller, Jane E. "Three Orders, Three Women." *Peace Review* 11, no. 2 (1999).

[6] Schmidtke, Dietrich. "Glossen zu den Sonntagspredigten." In *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter*. Ed. by Hans-Jochen Schiewer and Volker Mertens, 92–124. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992, ibid., 106.

stood literally only in a very specific context; otherwise, it has to be read figuratively or it makes no semantic sense.[7]

This can be clarified with the help of the functional tripartition:

1) Those who work, those who pray and those who fight are the society.

Those who work, those who pray and those who fight constitute a subtotal of society: society is the source domain, while the target domain consists of workers, fighters and those who pray. At first glance, both parts of the synecdoche can be understood literally, since they are deeply rooted in western society. The subtotal presents itself as the total, but it is not; noble women, merchants, magicians, sick people, children, and a number of other groups are also part of society. In addition, there could be societies that also include animals or who do not have a clergy, and for those, the literal understanding of the synecdoche would be a semantic anomaly.

The definition of *oratores-bellatores-laboratores* as a synecdoche and thereby as figurative speech can be clarified by changing the representatives. While the three above groups appear to be a representation of the entire society, the following personification does not:

2) Those who are married to kings, those who do not give birth and those who do the laundry are the society.

The principle of functional division is the same, but the replacement of male representatives with female representatives immediately changes the notion of the "entire society," and thereby shows the weakness of personifications and of their implicit claim to represent the totality. The perception that "1) is more plausible as a representation than 2)" is the result of a cultural—instinctive?—understanding of who and what is suitable as a personification. While all obvious personifications of nation states (Germania, Italia, Austria) or virtues (Justitia, Patientia), for example, are female embodiments of abstract but male-designated principles and are thus easily recognized personifications, it seems to be more difficult to discern the process of personification when both the abstract principle and the personification are male.

A comprehensive quantitative study of the evidence of tripartite models concerning the Late Middle Ages is lacking, although there is no shortage

[7] Ruwet, Nicolas. "Synekdochen und Metonymien (1975)." In Haverkamp, ed. *Theorie der Metapher*, 253–282.

of general assumptions about its continued operation. One example from the Late Middle Ages, according to Giles Constable, is a letter from Jean Gerson to the teacher of the French dauphin, where he identifies the three orders as clerics, knights and urban citizens,[8] a distinction that does not have much other than the number three in common with the pure formula of functional tripartition. Constable made no distinction between models that followed a functional division and those that were based on a moral logic, or those mixing both (which seems to be the most common type). This randomness in the analysis has been criticized,[9] which may be justified in terms of sound methodology, but nonetheless corresponds well with the reality of late medieval texts, where a binding model is lacking and diverse concepts often appear within a single text.[10] The mixture of different representatives for the three estates in medieval texts has been observed by Tilman Struve, who sees the need for an increased differentiation in models for social ordering as necessary to represent an increased social differentiation.[11] Given that the entire model consisting of three estates is only employed in a very few cases and that the principles used to choose the representatives rarely follow a strictly moral or a strictly functional division, the analysis of the tripartitions as metonymies in which the representatives chosen for the entity are crucial for the conception of the entity is justified.

This leads to the question of terminology: how are *oratores, bellatores* and *laboratores* translated into Middle Low German? Here an initial semantic break occurs between the Latin terminology, which is rooted in feudal society, and its Middle Low German counterpart. Since there is so little evidence of functional tripartition, it is difficult to identify the most commonly used phrases in the context, but it seems that *oratores* was usually translated as *ghestlike state* [spiritual order]. This could include both secular and monastic clergy, as well as semi-religious groups and nuns. Also, in the paraphrase 'penitential state,' the boundaries between the clerical order and laypeople with religious interests are blurred, since doing penance is something required of all Christians and by no means restricted

[8] Constable, *Three Studies*, 339.

[9] Jussen, Bernhard. *Der Name der Witwe: Erkundungen zur Semantik der mittelalterlichen Bußkultur*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, 33.

[10] Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 138.

[11] Struve, Tilman. "Pedes rei publicae: Die dienenden Stände im Verständnis des Mittelalters." *Historische Zeitschrift* 236 (1983).

to the clergy. None of the terms available for *oratores* in Middle Low German include a clear distinction based on the actual legal and economic privileges of the clergy.

For the second order, the *bellatores*, Middle Low German provides words that indicate the nobility but make no reference to fighting. During the fifteenth century, the term *gudemannen* was broadly used in the region for knights and their squires. The more hierarchical and differentiated *adel, junckere* and *edellude* appear frequently in lay didactical incunabula literature, while in other sources, such as diplomas and historiographical texts, they did not become common terms before the sixteenth century.[12] As mentioned above, the urban legal texts mention *forsten unde heren*, but merely as a demarcation from the urban legal community, not as a positive identification of a social group. Considering the organization of urban self-defence, with the duty of citizens to carry weapons and serve in the defence forces against noble sovereigns, any identification of the nobility with protection and fighting would be odd here.

Finally, the third order, *laboratores*, entirely lacks its own terminology in Middle Low German lay didactical literature, even though there are numerous terms for "the rest" in functional tripartition models: *gemene man* or *de menheyt*, for example. These, however, do not refer to a specific social function—working—but, in fact, refer to a distinction between the rulers and the rest. There is, however, a notion of a partition based on work or functionality, which is often asserted but rarely clarified. "Yn yslick is schuldich to arbeydende ny synem state"[13]—[everyone is obliged to work as determined by their order]—is a statement often made in the introduction to lay didactical books or chapters of books, but what "work determined by their order" actually means is not explained. It might mean a traditional functional division of labor, but it seems to have been part of common knowledge to such a degree that it did not have to be further clarified.

Traditionally, functional tripartition existed alongside another tripartition, moral tripartition. The decision for or against sexual activity and marriage is the basis of the categories of *virgines—coniugati—continentes*, a moral distinction known and employed since late antiquity.[14] It derives from the

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[12] Bei der Wieden, "Formierung des norddeutschen Niederadels," 323.

[13] Speygel der dogede, fol. 229v.

[14] Baldwin, John J. "Five Discourses on Desire. Sexuality and Gender in Northern France around 1200." *Speculum* 6 (1991).

exegesis of the biblical parable of the sower, which discusses people who hear the word of God. Much of the seed falls on stone or under thistles and does not bear fruit, but "Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown" (Mc 4:20). The seeds metaphorize people who hear the word of God, which proves fruitless for some, but has more or less positive outcome for others. Patristic exegesis assigned three orders of society to those who fruitfully hear the word of God: the virgins, who have decided never to enter the sphere of sexual life, bear hundredfold; the widows, who opted for chastity after a sexually active life, bear sixtyfold, and the married bear thirtyfold. Three important factors in this exegesis took on a relevance in late medieval adaptations: first, the fact that it encompasses only the righteous among the Christians—the others are the seeds that do not bear any fruit—second, the occupation of the highest rank by the clerical order, and third, the question of the gendered character of the categories.

Bernhard Jussen has shown that the distinction was not originally meant to be gender-specific, but that in the High Middle Ages the notions of virgins and the widowed as female gained importance.[15] In terms of a gendered perspective on social orders, it is significant that the *virgines—coniugati—continentes* model was the only one that not only explicitly included women, but also enabled them to assume a position in all three orders. In sermons in the German vernaculars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, social groups were ascribed to the three orders: the lowest order was made up of the majority of laypeople, the middle order of widows and secular priests who lived in chastity, and the highest order embraced monks and nuns.[16]

In other potential models, women were only conceived of as married laypeople; for example, the exegesis of Ez 14:14 addressing the figures of Noah, Daniel and Job uses the decision for or against a sexually active life as a distinguishing factor, but also includes other social roles and functions.[17] According to St. Augustine, the exegesis of the three righteous men is even more tightly linked to ecclesiastical offices: Noah represents the rulers of the Church, Daniel the chaste and Job those dealing with

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[15] Jussen, *Name der Witwe*, 315–316.

[16] A collection of evidence in Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 10–11.

[17] Wehrli-Johns, Martina. "Frauenfrömmigkeit außerhalb des Klosters. Vom Jungfrauenideal zur Heiligung der Ehe." *Herbergen der Christenheit. Jahrbuch für deutsche Kirchengeschichte* 147 (2000): 18.

secular duties or married people.[18] Both interpretations, the exclusively moral one and the one that includes social roles and functions, were used throughout the Middle Ages as arguments against those religious movements that claimed spiritual authority outside the institutions of the Church.[19] Both strongly support the idea that the clergy is not only entitled to privileges in the world, but in connection with these privileges both a superior moral status and a greater spiritual reward are reflexively assigned to the clergy. The automatic identification of the clergy with the chaste in this model indicates a large gap between the model and social reality: the model was not only a strong expression of an ideology supporting the privileges of the clergy, but it also provided a basis for criticism of the clergy's moral conduct. After all, celibacy and a life of chastity was a personal choice, and the identification of the clergy with both chastity and the highest spiritual reward is also a formulation of a normative ideal for living. As is indicated not only by the anticlerical attacks but also by the recurring inter-clerical debates about the clergy's moral conduct, many failed to live up to this ideal, and therefore a model meant to provide ideological support could be transformed into a model for moral condemnation.

Even though the distinction of moral and functional categories for tripartitions in the late medieval texts is an artificial one, it is nevertheless important to maintain for the analysis of the terminology used and to characterize the few tripartitions used: purely moral or functional distinctions are not to be expected, but moral and functional categories are the modules used for tripartitions and thus obviously basic for their understanding.

Multiple Tripartitions: Doernenkrantz van Collen *and* Ynkere to Gode

The only example from the Middle Low German didactical literature that makes extensive use of functional and moral tripartite divisions of society has been largely ignored in scholarship until now. The *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, a combination of the portrayal of a city, a treatise on order-specific conduct and a devotional book, is the most prominent example of the use of functional tripartition within the corpus of Middle Low German lay

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[18] Kress, Berthold. "Noah, Daniel and Job: The Three Righteous Men of Ezekiel 14.14 in Medieval Art." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 67 (2004): 259.

[19] Jussen, Bernhard. "Der 'Name' der Witwe. Zur 'Konstruktion' eines Standes in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter." In *Veuves et veuvage dans le haut Moyen Âge*. Ed. by Michel Parisse, 137–175. Paris: Picard, 1993, ibid., 170–171.

didactical books. The history of the production and reception of the text is largely unknown.[20] An inter-textual reference to it is made in another contemporary incunabulum, *Aflais und Heyldoms der Stadt Colne*, where the city's attractions are described to both locals and foreign pilgrims—this resembles the content of the first book of *Doernenkrantz* and is an indication that it was not only Cologne readers who made up the book's public. The two texts were subsequently printed together in two of the preserved editions, suggesting at least a limited joint distribution.

The sources for the anonymous compilation are unknown. The text itself mentions a number of different sources: Augustine's *De civitate Dei* is claimed to be the model for the first book; the second book about *ordenunge in der hilliger kyrchen* [the order of the Holy Church] mentions "Thomas (Aquinas), Albertus (Magnus), Emperor Henry and the teachers who established the ecclesiastical and imperial laws", a very loose allusion to canon law and scholastic writings and commentaries.[21] Chronicles of the city (*Agrippina, Koelhoffsche Chronik*) are also mentioned, but their use and citation have not been the subjects of research up to this point. *Doernenkrantz van Collen* definitely qualifies as an anonymous compilation, and there is nothing to suggest that Middle Low German was not the language in which it was originally written. The book is also an example of a compiling technique that gives a general impression of inconsistency and eclecticism, which is more than apparent in the use of models and forms of social ordering. Generally, the book advances an ideology distinctly supporting the clergy, and its appendix, a treatise on noblemen, reinforces the impression of a clergy pointing out its own dominance, probably because it was in decline.

The strong connection to the city of Cologne and its history and churches is unusual for a devotional book, as is the extremely forceful

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[20] Some aspects of the printing history and tradition of this incunabulum are discussed in Schmitz, *Überlieferung*. He mentions and uses an unpublished thesis for a Staatsexamen: Venns, Dirk. "Studien zum Dornenkranz von Köln." Staatsarbeit, Münster 1997. According to Schmitz, Venn sees the urban element in the foreground and the demarcation of the orders as a more superficial element for the structure of the text. Schmitz, *Überlieferung*, 94. Older catalogues have the incunabulum under another title: *Van den dryen staeden, die got up erden hait, und dat goytwillige regiment*. Busch, Richard. "Verzeichnis der Kölner Inkunabeln in der Großherzoglichen Hofbibliothek zu Darmstadt, Teil III." *Zentralblatt für Buch- und Bibliothekswesen* 7, no. 4 (1880): 132. The woodcuts and their further use in other books from the Koelhoff printing office are described by Schramm, Albert. *Die Kölner Drucker*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981, 7.

[21] Doernenkrantz van Collen, fol. 22r.

combination of *Ständedidaxe* and a devotional book. Unlike all other texts from the corpus, in the *Doernenkrantz* the division of the Christian society into orders is a central structuring element, and order-related terminology is omnipresent. The terms *stayt* and *grade* are used synonymously for social orders in the preface; later in the book, the terms *ordenunge* and *hierarchia* are also used in an apparently undifferentiated way.

The combination of moral and functional categories for the classification of orders is characteristic of *Doernenkrantz van Collen* and is mirrored in the structure of the entire text. The body of the text is divided into three books, each of which deals with one of the three estates and their specific duties: the first, *de bittende stand* [the pleading order], is identified as the ecclesiastical order (19v) in a section that deals mainly with the churches and sacred sites in Cologne, noting which station of the Passion of Christ should be contemplated during a visit. On the matrix of the functional tripartition, this order would be the clergy, but in this context the chapter is directed to all Christians, whose duty it is to visit and contemplate spiritual sites. That which is presented as an order-specific description of duties is not formulated as a criticism of the clergy, but as an indication of how laypeople can achieve the merit originally reserved for this social order. Here the paradox of didactical literature is obvious: the clergy describes its own necessity and merits, but at the same time calls upon laypeople to follow its example, thereby working towards its own redundancy. Additionally, the terminology is blurred: the pleading order is occasionally also named *de bŏteners*, the penitents, thereby combining the first order in the functional tripartition with the second order in the moral tripartition and opening them both for secular people.

The second social order, the prelates and rulers (21r), is to some degree consistent with the traditional explanation of the functional tripartition, called the *Stait der beschermunge*. This social order is clarified in nine chapters: 1) the disorder, 2) the order in the realm of souls, 3) the order of the Roman Empire, 4) that all order comes from heaven, 5) the members of the second grade (Church potentates, regardless of office), 6) how each social order is to adhere to the divine order, 7) the makeup of the city council, 8) the governing of a good city; and finally 9) the city of Cologne in particular. It is obvious that the second order is not meant to encompass the nobility, but instead replaces it with the Cologne city government as part of both the Holy Roman Empire and the Episcopal hierarchy. Thus, the second order is the place where government and obedience are discussed, and here no distinction is made between ecclesiastical and secular authority.

The third book addresses the order of "workers and ordinary people", and the pronoun *you* is used throughout to address the readers. It contains disparate chapters; a brief history of the city of Cologne, as well as a list of eight virtues expected of its citizens.

The scope of this division of people is clarified twice: the very first sentence of the introduction divides *the believers in the Holy Church* into three categories and states them to have existed *before the birth of Christ, after the birth of Christ* and *now*.[22] This is an attempt to define the social orders as transcending time and having their counterparts in the Old Testament. As to the overall structure of the text, the metaphor for society takes this form:

Penitents		
Protectors	metonymy	Christian Church / the Empire / Cologne
Workers		

This division looks like a faithful repetition of the *oratores—bellatores—laboratores*—model: those who pray, those who fight/protect and those who work. But there are inconsistencies: the penitents are not in any way congruent with the clerical order, since the obligation to do penance also applies to laypeople, and those clerics who exercise secular power (those of the second grade) belong to the second order, the protectors, which was traditionally restricted to noblemen, but is constituted here by the urban government. The target domain of the metonymy is Christianity and the city and the empire as political structures, as the subchapters on government and on urban and imperial organizational structures show. The explanation of the tripartite model has in a sense taken on the realities of late medieval society and incorporated them into a traditional form—when looking at the form overall, there is an appearance of an unbroken use of the functional tripartition in the late medieval text, but if the focus is on the representatives forming the metonymic entity, the gap is revealed. There are additional detectable differences from tradition as well, all of which are related to ways of ordering society.

In the introduction, the division of society into three orders is grounded in an exegesis of Ez 14:14 and personified by the three righteous men Noah, Daniel and Job: "Noe dem prelaten steyt. In Daniele Junffer stayt. Und in Job dat guede leuen des eligen staytz." [Noah (belongs) to the order of

[22] "Vur der gebuert ind na der geburt Cristi synt gewest vnde noch syn drye graede der geleuvigen in der hilliger kirche." Doernenkrantz, fol. 2r.

the prelates. In Daniel the virgin order (is incorporated). And in Job the good life of the married order.][23] The source for this is St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, according to which Noah represents the order of the prelates (*rectores*), Daniel the chaste (*continentes*) and Job married people (*coniugati*). Here we have both the moral and functional factors that underlie the distinctions being merged. In other writings, Augustine either classifies all Christians according to this model or the righteous overall based on their varying degrees of merit.[24] As a variation on the moral tripartition of *virgines—coniugati—continentes*, this exegesis was well-known in the Middle Ages, with a major shift occurring in the Middle Low German text: in the personification of the three men, the highest two orders are traditionally reserved for the two grades of clerics, and thereby for men, while women, even nuns, are only to be found in the third order.[25] In Augustine's writings, the three righteous men are associated both with the grades and hierarchy of the Church and with the moral division found in the parable of the sower, and thus the medieval tradition manifests different approaches to defining the human orders represented by Noah, Daniel and Job; in some cases different types of saints, in others the three orders of Christianity in general. In the *Legenda aurea*, there is yet another interpretation: Noah represents the *nihil possidentes*, Daniel the *discreti* and Job the *tribulati*.[26] Additionally, Augustine also interprets the orders of society as deriving from Noah's three sons in Gn 9:18–27; Cham, Sem and Japhet as the founding fathers of the orders of the free, the unfree and the knights, an exegesis that is also well-known in medieval social and political theory,[27] but not taken into account in Middle Low German literature. Thus, the naming of the three righteous men and St. Augustine in *Doernenkrantz van Collen* potentially recovers an entire exegetical tradition.

As such, the introduction also presents the two traditional tripartitions side by side; a more or less faithful reproduction of the functional tripartition, combined with an exegesis of the parable traditionally used for the clarification of the moral tripartition. The intertwining and overlapping of these two continues throughout the text, with other potential tripartitions being added to the picture as it unfolds.

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[23] Doernenkrantz, fol. 2r.
[24] Jussen, "Name," 168.
[25] Wehrli-Johns, "Frauenfrömmigkeit," 18.
[26] Kress, "Noah, Daniel and Job," 260–261.
[27] Struve, "Pedes," 9.

The inconsistencies between the introduction and books I–III, which deal with the three orders, are obvious: first, the different ranking of the three orders, in which the clerical order on one occasion is ranked first and on another second; second, in the introduction's personification, which uses Noah to represent the *rectores*, the order of the prelates is explicitly intended as a clerical order, while the second order in the book itself includes secular and ecclesiastical rulers.[28] Similarly, the penitential order in the second book includes monks and laypeople, a definition that resembles the widowed order more than it does the virgin order, as personified in Daniel. In the introduction itself, the exegesis is traditional in nature and maintains a strictly moral distinction. In the three following books, functional distinctions (protecting, working) are used in combination with the moral quality of doing penance.

While the ascriptions of the representatives of the orders are inconsistent with regard to the medieval tradition, the introduction gives quite a traditional explanation of the mutual duties of the orders, one that resembles functional tripartition: the prelates are supposed to protect secular and ecclesiastical orders, the virgin order or ecclesiastical order is supposed to pray for the other two and the married order is supposed to work for the other two, providing tithes and taxes, *also is eyn yecklich stait krystlicher ordenung verbunden zu arbeyden* [in this way, all orders within the Christian order are obliged to work].[29] The connection between a certain concept of work and a functional division of society is obvious, and it applies a stricter line of logic than simply the identification of the *bellatores* with the nobility, for example.

Conceived of as such, the clergy is of minor importance, which is surprising in a book clearly written on the basis of the desire to maintain the clergy's privileges. However, on several levels, the inconsistencies of the tripartite ordering models undermine this effort. The first book deals with the penitential state and its merits, which are tied to the city's shrines; at the same time, it also encourages people who are not clerics to visit these shrines. Second, spiritual and temporal authority are summed up in the second order: this triggers a latent contradiction within functional tripartition regarding the division between those who work and those who pray: ecclesiastical jurisdiction, ecclesiastical rulers fulfilling profane

[28] "Staet der prelaten vnd ouersten Reygenten, die dat gemeyn guet regeren, geystlichs und werentlichs staytz." Doernenkrantz, fol. 2v.

[29] Doernenkrantz, fol. 2r.

duties, archbishops serving as sovereigns—all these "prelates" are moved from the penitential order to the order of "prelates," "prelate" in this case not referring to ecclesiastical prelates, but to rulers in general. This might resemble an actual functional division where the sections of the clergy involved in governing increasingly came to resemble and behave like secular rulers, but, as an explanation of functional tripartition, it is fatal. The definition of the second order as "those who fight" points to one of the points of criticism that the clergy had been faced with throughout the Middle Ages: involvement with secular duties ranging from sovereignty over villages and peasants to conducting wars and reigning over territories. This is an example of involuntary anticlericalism, which derives from the semantic confusion around the two different metonymies used for society—one of them originally favoring the nobility, the other the clergy, and both of them obviously having lost their meaning and dominance as narratives of legitimation.

Probably the insensitivity of the text regarding this aspect of the division derives from the fact that it confuses functional tripartition with another tripartite division—prelates-monks-laypeople, which better suits the content of the three books of *Doernenkrantz*, but does not at the outset include any notion of secular rulers being part of anything other than the laity. On the other hand, an emphasis on the working order, and thereby an urban lay ideology, is not apparent. The increasing differentiation of the working classes is in no way mirrored—some professional groups go unmentioned in the third book of the *Doernenkrantz* and separate moral didactics for peasants, artisans and merchants are lacking. The third book on the working order as such makes no effort to describe this order or its members, but primarily focuses on them being subordinate to secular power, which in turn is supposed to derive from ecclesiastical power.

Regarding the target area of the text, there are several factors clarifying the fact that it is not simply Christianity that is intended, but the political body of the Holy Roman Empire in general. That society is conceived of as the political structure of the empire is also indicated by the total absence of women from the book, with the only exception being the Virgin Mary.

The Christian notion of society is most substantially developed in the first book on the penitential state, where the description of the Passion of Christ is highlighted with several allusions to the presupposed role of Jews in this drama. The anti-Jewish element is not only present in the text—pictures and statues of the Jews torturing and killing Christ that were apparently to be found in the Cologne churches are also mentioned, thereby connecting the textual order to the material world. The emphasis

on the cruelty of the Jews is effectively rendered tangible, as a repetitive element in the first book is the reference to the *iodesche synagoge* in many of the subsection titles, and thus each paragraph begins with a highlighted red initial making reference to the cruelty of the Jews. Anti-Jewish resentment is thus a further underlying element in the text, and the "Jew" is implicitly presented as the antitype to the Christian penitent.

Even if we assume that functional tripartition was one major linguistic form for social ordering during the High Middle Ages—at least in certain areas and discourses—it seems to have been abandoned by the Late Middle Ages. But functional tripartition was not absent from late medieval political theory because it no longer fit the reality—how can a group of three representatives encompass an entire society that had already in the Early Middle Ages been much more complex than this and had allowed for a far greater number of social strata? Functional tripartition had no significance in the Late Middle Ages, because the meaning it produced—an ideology that supported both clergy and nobility—was no longer pertinent in the given political circumstances. The only text in the corpus that uses it, the *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, deliberately combines it with a moral tripartition and with explanations of authority and of the two powers.

The limited evidence of the use of the functional tripartition as a trope for society in the Middle Low German corpus clearly mirrors the differences in the political and social conditions the scheme tries to metaphorize: the nobility is replaced by a secular government, and the moral superiority of the clergy is replaced by a general demand for moral behavior on the part of all Christians. The fact that there is only one example of the use of this metaphor in a relatively vast corpus leads to two conclusions: either religious didactical literature was not the place for a general explanation of the social order—this is an explanation that hopefully will be invalidated through this study—or the general fondness so many scholars have had for functional tripartition is in part due to the blurriness of the concept, which makes it the perfect matrix for the projection of all kinds of different functional divisions. Georges Dumézil's collection of evidence of tripartite division is an early example of this. The functions are not properly distinguished from each other, and the many subsequent studies on tripartite phenomena repeat the problem. Nonetheless, Dumézil's work points to yet another possible interpretation of the lack of tripartite divisions in the Middle Low German corpus: Dumézil has but one piece of evidence for the existence of three functionally divided gods in Germanic sources, and otherwise the evidence supporting this division

in this region and time is very weak, both as regards gods and as regards human social relations.[30] Here the potential of *Doernenkrantz van Collen* belonging to this type of Middle Low German anonymous originals and their specific discourse becomes plausible: it is probable that Middle Low German literature—which, as has been proven, was more influenced by northern German and Dutch traditions than by those from High German and Romanic areas—did not take up functional tripartition on a broader basis because it was not culturally rooted. This is an assumption that cannot be verified on the basis of the Middle Low German corpus alone, but requires a comparison with sources from other regions.

Doernenkrantz van Collen is the only text in the entire sample of Middle Low German lay didactical literature that encompasses tripartite divisions of social orders and uses them as a structuring element for the entire book. The different tripartite models are situated on different rhetorical levels, present different metonymic representatives of society and have different target areas. The overlapping and intertwined tripartite models with moral, social and functional divisions are partially contradictory, as some are formulated on the basis of the functional tripartition tradition, while others are formulated in the context of the exegetical tradition of the three righteous men, with each of them inserting deviant content into the traditional forms—the context of the rhetorical forms proves that they have incorporated new and different semantics. The absence of the clergy and the nobility as clearly designated groups is characteristic as a result of the dominance of distinctions based on authority, on the one hand, and on moral virtue, on the other hand. *Doernenkrantz van Collen* does not provide a single consistent form for the social order, but the number three as a structuring element is a constant factor throughout the text. This consistency is, however, restricted to the number three, which structures both the source area of the metonymy and the text itself, but fails to provide an undeviating decoding of the metonymy—or even consistency in the metonymic representatives chosen. Furthermore, the book also includes other models and metaphors such as the nine choirs of angels, which I will address later, and is thereby typical of lay didactical literature overall: more is more.

[30] Belier, Wouter W. *Decayed gods: Origin and development of Georges Dumézil's "Idéologie tripartie"*. Leiden: Brill, 1991, 109. Belieer criticises both the unclear basis for Dumézil's theory and lack of evidence in the Germanic sources to support it.

Although consistent in the choice of metonymic representatives in a tripartite formula, there is another good example of the combination of moral and functional aspects in the use of tripartite metaphors in Late Medieval religious literature in a text that is barely touched upon in recent research and only preserved in two copies of an edition printed by Hans Dorn in Braunschweig in 1508.[31] Its title is *Speigel der waren unde rechten ynkere to gode. Ynkere* is a term seldom used in Middle Low German.[32] In some cases in the book, the term is used as the verb *umkehren*—"to convert".[33] This would make the title "Mirror of those who convert from the world." Another possible meaning would be "Mirror of those who despise the world"—probably the noun *ynkere* derives from the Old Norse word *ynka—ömka*, meaning pity or sorrow, or at least it plays with the double meaning.[34] Some aspects of the text have been described by Protestant scholars of the nineteenth century as progressive, since there is a strong emphasis on contrition as a precondition for salvation rather than the sacraments themselves. But since contrition is, on the one hand, a spiritual experience and, on the other hand, synonymous with the entrance into an order, the allegedly progressive character of the text might be a Protestant misinterpretation.[35] A Latin, German or Dutch model text is lacking. The characteristics of different discourses are used to establish the text's authority: the title insinuates that the book, written by an anonymous Franciscan brother on the basis of Scripture, is useful to both monastic and lay people (this is, however, contradicted by the book's content). The metaphor of the mirror goes unexplained, with the essential detail seeming to be that the entire text addresses a monastic setting, with the division of the monks into three groups being key.

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[31] Scheller, *Bücherkunde*, 133–134. Graesse, Johann. *Lehrbuch einer allgemeinen Literärgeschichte aller bekannten Völker der Welt, von der ältesten bis auf die neueste Zeit*. Dresden: Arnold, 1843, 717, under "Abendland—Moralphilosophie—Specula."

[32] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wöterbuch* does not contain a lemma for *ynkere*; *Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch* describes *inker* as deriving from in-keren, in the meaning of "contemplator". *Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch 1.* Ed. by Mathias Lexer. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1872, 1436.

[33] "Disse voranderynge der tyd/gyft dat me syk schal ynkeren/van dem tytlyken to dem geistliken [. . .]" Ynkere to gode, fol. 3r.

[34] Lemma ynka—ömka in *Fornsvensk lexikalisk databas*.

[35] Scheller characterizes the book as an "Erbauungsbuch, worin ganz helle Funken von wiederauflebender Vernunft schimmern. Gott ist hier nicht als der grimmige Schwachkopf dargestellt, der erst durch die Intermediatsbitte der allwissenden ! Heiligen und Heiliginnen zur Erhörung und Gnade bewegt werden muss." Scheller, *Bücherkunde*, 133–134.

> Nu vynde yck drieerleye geistliker mynschen
> Penitentes
> Laborantes
> Contemplantes
> De boeters de arbeiters vnde de Schauers, dar yewelck heft eyne andere wysze den de andere, eyn heft ok mer und groter sake den de andere.[36]
>
> [Now I find three kinds of spiritual people, penitents, workers and contemplatives, and each of these is different from the others, with one also having a more far-reaching and significant purpose than the others.]

The distinction thus aims not at all Christians, but only at spiritual people, which might mean only the clergy, only monastic clergy, or the religiously inclined and converts in general. The distinction is also introduced as representing a clear hierarchy in the different modes or ways of living of the three groups. Which of the representatives occupies the highest rank is from the outset unclear.

The distinctions between spiritual people are not called orders, but *wyse*, suggesting a functional division, and they are distinguished by the meritorious acts they accomplish through their way of life—*sake*. The distinction is established based on and in connection with different occupations within the monastery, which in their turn are connected to different degrees of spiritual merit, since people can choose this way of life and can, after a long time in the monastery, ascend to a higher level. Besides this basic tripartite division of people, several other tripartite divisions serve to structure the text and are highlighted by setting them in separate columns. They do not distinguish people, but rather serve as subdivisions of the duties of each group of monks. For example, the reasons why the evening is the best time to lament and mourn are *ratione cassationis, commissionis*, and *lamentationis* (3v). Contrition is clarified in the triad *cognitio—contritio—accessio* (16v): the workers are supposed to fulfil their part through *humiliatio—oblatio—commendatio* (21r). This points to an educated audience for the text, even though it is written in the vernacular, since the mixture of Latin tripartite divisions and vernacular explanations seems to be characteristic of texts directed (primarily) at clerics.

Ynkere to gode leaves no doubt that the entrance into an order is the only way to amass spiritual merit, and the earlier the entrance the better. The world and its order outside the monastery are of no interest here, but for the internal monastic order, functional and moral tripartition

[36] Ynkere to gode, fol. 15v–16r.

is relevant. *Penitentes* are divided into two sub-groups: those who have recently entered a monastery and have to do penance for many years of sins in the world and those who have been living in a monastic order for a long time, but have fallen into sin, for which they must atone. Contrition is a psychological exercise required by penitents, but the outer sign, the entrance into the monastery, is also of great significance. The penitents occupy the lowest level in the moral hierarchy. Belonging to this order seems to be only partly voluntarily—the willingness to do penance is crucial, but generally anybody can fall from grace and into a state requiring penance. Monastic people who have fallen into sin by being too involved in secular matters or who generally are in an unhealthy state of mind "are also sinners, and as sinners are also penitents, if they have a sufficiently developed will to improve their lives."[37] The term for the lowest order is the same as that used in *Doernenkrantz van Collen* for the first order in a descending hierarchy—the social place and ranking of the penitents does not seem to be fixed in the Middle Low German corpus, and it seems to rely heavily on the framework in which the representatives operate—the penitents occupy the highest moral rank in the world, but, within the monastic world, the lowest.

The term indicating the second group, *laborantes*, means something entirely different than the third order in the traditional functional tripartition. The workers are people inside the monasteries who have to fulfil an office; for example, sisters who have to undertake practical duties in order to keep the monastery running.[38] This is the only mention of the spiritual people also potentially being sisters—there are no female examples in the areas of penitents and contemplatives. Since according to most monastic rules all members of the monastic community were obliged to have an office, duties or engage in manual labor, the second state is not morally defined, but is entirely functional and also encompasses all members of the monastic community at some point.

And finally there are *contemplantes*, the highest rank being those who contemplate God and whose labor will not have been in vain. The highest order of merit is said to belong to the spiritual people who went to the

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[37] "De synd ok sunder, vnde de sulften sundere synd ok boeters, efte se recht eynen groten willen hebben er leuende to beteren." Ynkere to gode, fol. 16v.

[38] "De arbeders synt de gestliken mynschen in den klosteren, efte de myt ampte synt beladen alse welke suster de wat muten uth richten vor eyn gemene, dar dorch eyn kloster upgeholden wert." Ibid., fol. 19v.

school of Christ at the outset, based on Jean Gerson's *Theologia mystica*.[39] Within the monastery they are not occupied with manual labor, but devote their time entirely to the praise of God. Through the close textual connection between this somewhat mysterious description of the highest rank and the subsequent inquiry and advice based on the *Ars moriendi*, the contemplative order is placed at the end of life and is meant as a preview of life after death: if, after forty years of labor one is able to die in the right way and therefore permitted to see God, his labor has not been in vain.[40] This points to a potential interpretation of the text by a lay audience, reading the monastery not as a physical place, but as an arena of spiritual exercise also open to laypeople, or as a model for the entire society.

The distinction between *laborantes* and *contemplantes* resembles that between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. The text claims Thomas Aquinas as its authority—all monks are obliged to take on and fulfil any duty they are given in a monastery, both for the common good and for the sake of their own humility and obedience—but the motivation for work in the monastic order is similar to the concept of Bernhard of Clairvaux, who sees manual labor as an ongoing duty for the *contemplantes* as part of their perpetual penance. The three groups are not, in this case, treated as distinct, but as stages that every member of the monastic order will and must go through sooner or later. And this might provide an indication as to how this metaphor should be decoded: it is probably not used figuratively at all, but is both the result of a very pragmatic interpretation of Bernhard's concept of life in a monastery and of a literal description of life in a monastery. There were the *conversae*, who entered the monastery in order to do penance but had not yet taken vows, the simple brothers or sisters doing the every day work necessary for the monastery to function such as laundry, cooking and so on, and the monks who basically lived to pray, at least during periods of their lives.

On the level of a literal reading, *Ynkere to gode* can hardly be read as a metaphor for society in general. The text uses a tripartite distinction that combines moral and functional elements and encompasses only a small number of Christians living inside a monastic order, separated from the rest of society both by the walls of the monastery as an outer sign and

[39] "Gerson sprikt dat de gnade des schawenden leuendes behort aldermeist to den geistliken de yn der schule christi synt de sik schollen flieten efte se an erem ende mochten komen to rechten schawen." Ibid., fol. 25r.

[40] "Dann ist die arbeit wol angelecht, de se xxxx yare lenger efter korter hebben gehadt." Ibid.

by their engagement in contrition as an inner sign. Those who mourn the world, or those who have converted, are clearly the elite among the Christians and are not meant to represent all believers. The outside world serves as a metaphor itself here: the merchant, often an example for required virtues or feared vices within the texts is, in *Ynkere to gode*, used to provide an image within an analogy. The merchant comes home in the evening when the market is closed, and works on his accounting. Those who belong to the spiritual sphere should sit down in the evening and contemplate what they have done during the day. "Evening" and "when the market is closed" are explicit analogies, emphasized using the same graphic distinctions as are found in editions of the Bible between Scripture and glossae, double slashes and small asterisks separating image and explanation.[41]

The monastic community, consisting of the three orders, includes both genders and all of the different clerical grades and statuses: *so mannych reyn herte, so manche leue yunkfruwe, so mannycher andechtiger prester, so mannigher hilligher* mynsche[42] [many a pure heart, many a dear virgin, many a devout priest, many a holy person] and they are all said to stand in the same place on top of Mount Sinai, and are equivalent to the holy city of Jerusalem. The monastic community thus is a typological analogy for the heavenly Jerusalem, prefigured in contemporary life and fulfilled at the end of time. The scene at Mount Sinai, where the people of Israel gather and Moses receives the Decalogue on their behalf, is traditionally read as biblical evidence of the people of Israel being the chosen people—following the metaphor, Christian monks claim to be the direct descendants of the chosen people. The monastic community is metaphorically elevated to a transcendent and superior sphere, while the rest of humankind is not even mentioned. The use of a tripartite division combining functional and moral principles for distinction in a text written by a cleric and directed to other clerics proves the popularity of tripartite divisions within learned discourse, which also can be used in the vernacular when dealing with similar topics. The tripartite division continues to support, in its updated form from the early sixteenth century, an entirely clerical

[41] "Alse de geistlyk willen ryke werden behort to / so der auent heer geit / so der market uth is / so de arbeit vorgangen is / dat sy sik ynkeren vnde vorsamelen vnde sehen wu se den dach hebben to bracht / myt wat vorluste efte gewyn / wat se den market gewunnen efte verloren hebben." Ibid., fol. 3v–4r.

[42] Ibid., fol. 8v.

ideology, making manifest the clergy's claim to represent the saved among Christians.

III.2 *The Terminology of Moral Tripartition*

Ynkere to gode does not employ a traditional moral tripartition, even though its emphasis on the righteous among the Christians suggests a connection to this clerical model for social ordering. But even though the entire tripartition is not used, its single members appear frequently in Middle Low German didactical literature, and thus the question arises whether the semantics of not the entire formula for society but of its single parts remain valid and understandable: how are the virgin state, the widow state and the married state conceived?

Both medieval and Reformation moral didactics formulated rules for virgins, wives and widows, and both placed positive emphasis on the married order.[43] But the fixed forms in which advice for these was presented are hardly visible in Late Medieval sources in the vernacular due to the translation processes between different languages and genres commanding different terminology and style, and thus the representatives of each order must be investigated separately. The linguistic patterns used to present the representatives lead to the dissolution of the moral tripartition, since married people are not dealt with in connection with the other potential moral stages, but always in the form of the husband-wife or the man-woman binomial.

Studies of sermons in the German vernacular from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show that the formula of the thirty-, sixty- and a hundredfold reward continued to be used, with the same understanding of virgin life as superior to other lifestyles.[44] In the lay didactical literature of the fifteenth century, the situation is different: there is no text within the corpus of Middle Low German didactical literature that would directly use the biblical metaphors provided for moral tripartition and no exegesis of the parable of the sower from the Gospel according to Mark, and the only appearance of the three righteous men from the Book of Ezekiel is in *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, where it is not used for moral tripartion, but for an extended functional tripartition.

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[43] Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 91.
[44] Schumacher, *Sündenschmutz*, 124.

Moral tripartition reflects, in an even higher degree than functional tripartition, a clerical ideology that combines and legitimizes the privileges the clergy actually had with a supposed superior moral status ascribed to those living in chastity. Even though they were the majority, married laypeople received little attention in the various clarifications of the moral tripartition in theological and didactical writings, which paid much more attention to the spiritual education of virgins and widows (that is, in this context, to people in monasteries and the clergy in general) than to the salvation of the married laypeople. However, lay didactical literature was essentially directed to the spiritual education of laypeople and, consequently with the dissolution of moral tripartition as a fixed trope, married people constitute the most prominent remaining order. This does not indicate a general shift in theological attitudes about marriage—positive imagery about love and companionship and the possibility of salvation for married people had already been in circulation in theological writings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—but the focus on the laity adds to the general shift from tripartite to binomial imagery for society, with the relations in the burgher's household at the center. Not only moral tripartition overall, but virgins and widows also remain marginal in late medieval archives, and the terminology connected to their orders points to the complete loss of the original meaning of moral tripartition.

Considering this semantic shift in the terminology regarding virgins and widows, basic questions must first be answered. What are the words that denote virgins, widows and married people in Middle Low German? Are these terms gender-specific? And do they correspond to a specific understanding of these groups? Of particular interest is the question of the gendered character of the words, since studies on moral tripartition in Latin texts have detected a semantic shift in the terminology for virgins and widows from gender-neutral to an entirely feminine formulation of the terms *virgo* and *vidua*.[45] Bernhard Jussen claims that by the thirteenth century, women were not excluded from the symbolic social order, but were thoroughly represented in those models that made use of moral divisions.[46]

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[45] On the Latin tradition of these terms and concepts see for example Carlson, Cindy L., and Angela J. Weisl. "Introduction. Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity." In *Constructions of widowhood and virginity in the Middle Ages*. Ed. by Cindy L. Carlson and Angela J. Weisl, 1–21. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

[46] Jussen, *Name der Witwe*, 319.

However, by the fifteenth century and in the case of literature in the vernacular, the situation appears otherwise: the traditional semantics of the *virgines—continentes—coniugati* model seem to have disappeared entirely, eventually in replaced by another model that is substantially different from the moral tripartition and is primarily known from literary sources from the Anglo-Saxon region that might have taken over: maid—wife—widow.[47] This model for social ordering is interesting in the context of moral didactics since it formulates and requires different codes of conduct for each woman in the different stages of her life, while on the level of rhetorical tropes, it functions very differently than does the moral (and the functional) tripartition, since it is not society that is its target domain, but rather each individual laywoman and thus is not a metonymy. First, the model aims only to describe women; second, it is oriented towards a woman's life cycle and not an immutable decision in favor of an order; and third, it mainly targets laywomen. While moral tripartition implies an either-or decision, the different stages in the maid—wife—widow model are built upon each other: you cannot become a widow without having first been a wife. Their hierarchical relation to each other is also less clearly defined. Even though the two models use the same terminology, they contain entirely different cultural concepts of the groups, orders or stages they imply. Thus the terminology of virgins, wives and widows in Middle Low German must first be investigated to determine what became of moral tripartition and whether it was replaced by an entirely female model based on stages of life.

The Virgin

The virgin, most prominent in the traditional texts about the moral tripartition, leads a life of much lesser importance in the Middle Low German texts. The potential meanings stretch from 'woman of young age' through 'sexually inexperienced man or woman' to 'monk or nun'. The direct translation of "virgo" is *iunkvrouw(e)*, and there is also the substantive *iunkcvrouwschop*, "virginity," with *junkvrulik* as a connected adjective. The two substantives, virgin and virginity, can be used for either gender to mean sexually inexperienced, while for women they can also indicate her age; in that context, however, *junfer* is also used. In legal and normative sources from the urban context, virgins are heavily underrepresented, probably as

[47] Beattie, Cordelia. *Medieval single women: The politics of social classification in late medieval England*. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007, 3.

a result of their lowly political status.[48] In religious texts that are close to a Latin source, such as Bible paraphrases and hagiographic legends, there is much evidence of *iunkvrouwe* denoting a man living chastely and ascetically. However, no specific synonymity with monk or nun is documented.[49] Specific terms for nuns are generally rare: *nunne* is much more often documented in figurative terms for food (*nunnekenfurt*—a kind of cake) or herbs (*nunnenkrut*) than as an actual literal term for the Latin *sanctimonialis*, even though the direct translation was known.[50] *Klostervrouwe* is also found, which should be somewhat clearer in terms of meaning a woman living in a monastery and belonging to a religious order. *Syster* appears frequently in Middle Low German texts as well, but very rarely means anything other than "biological sister." A potential circumlocution for virgins in the sense of nuns is *geystlike frouwen*, but in that case the actual canon law status of the person is unclear, as it can also mean a woman living in a lay community, a Beguine or a *conversa*, or someone living in a monastery who has not taken vows. *Geistlicheyt* is instead the translation of *religio* or *spiritualitas* and is used to define a moral attribute of a government, for example, and not for the clergy as an order.[51] Consequently, *geystliche vrouwe* is not necessarily the proper term for a nun. Additionally, in a gender-neutral form, *geystlike mynsche* can be used as a synonym for *iunckmynsche*, "spiritual person," with clarifications of this status opening up the entire semantic field of monastic life, chastity inside the world and differences between youth and adulthood: a *iunckmynsche* or *geystlicke mynsche* is someone who wishes to contemplate the Passion of Christ, and whose soul is still young and uneducated in the ways of loving God.[52] The desire for contemplation replaces the decision to live within an order found in the traditional metaphor: the combination of young and uneducated suggests a biological age, a stage in the life cycle, rather than a status.

While a vast amount of didactical and parenetical literature on virginity as a lifetime choice was typical of the Early Middle Ages and the writings of the Church Fathers, by the Late Middle Ages the category is somewhat

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48 See above the chapter on "The real world".

49 *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch II*, 411–412.

50 *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch III*, 208–209.

51 *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch II*, 36–37.

52 "Wo syk een iunckmynsche holden schal. Een ghestlick mynsche de sick wyl bekummeren mit dem lydende vnses leuen heren ihesu cristi, vnde sine sele noch wat iunck is, vnde vnwetende in gotliker leuen, vnd in bekantennysse gades, de mach vornemen desse wise." Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien, Lübeck 1498, fol. 195r.

more flexible and permutable,[53] and its importance in lay didactical discourse is radically diminished compared to Latin learned discourse.

This is reflected in Middle Low German terminology, which lacks a clear demarcation of virginity: virgins could be either young men or young women who would potentially marry or men and women who had taken a vow of chastity and intended to remain chaste throughout their lives. The gender-neutral character of the term *virgo* in the Latin texts of the Church Fathers, found its equivalent in the Middle Low German *iunkfrouwe*, which could be used for either males or females living in chastity. But the gendered nature of the terminology is not consistent—it varies from text to text.

In those texts that are close translations and include material from penitentiary books and *summae*, virginity clearly can be applied to—and lost by—either gender. The Middle Low German *Summa confessorum* is a text that closely follows a High German translation of a Latin original, and here the gender-neutral use of the term *iunckfrowe* can be traced back to the use of the Latin term *virgo*.

> Wo ein minsche vorlust de iunckfroweliken kuscheit, xi. Iunckfrowelike kuscheyt de vorlust ein minsche wen he mit gudem willen deyt unkusche werke mit einem anderen minschen, edder mit sodanem lusten dat van unkuschen gedanken dat saet siner naturen van ôm geyth, unde wen dat saet der naturen van dem minschen geyth mit willen so is de kuscheit vorloren.[54]
>
> [How a person loses his virgin chastity, chapter XI. A person loses his virgin chastity when he voluntarily does unchaste things with another person, or when he is so full of lust that in unchaste thoughts the semen of his nature escapes him, and when the semen of nature voluntarily leaves him, his chastity is lost.]

The voluntary loss of semen is something that in practice applies to men rather than to women, so obviously men and women are chaste by nature, and this is a moral rather than a social quality that can be lost as a result of unchaste thoughts and the will to lose it. Marriage or even sexual intercourse are not the standards by which virginity is lost, and accordingly it is defined as a moral status deriving from one's decision whether or not to retain this status. Men's biological condition makes them equally susceptible to losing their virginity—the scholastic preoccupation with the

[53] Carlson/Weisl, "Introduction," 4.
[54] Summa to dude, letter K, chapter 11.

loss of semen in one's sleep suggests that men are at an even greater risk. Civil status and family life are not considered distinguishing factors in this traditional concept of virginity.

The notion of virginity being a status that anyone can achieve and lose is also to be found in commentaries on the Decalogue and in the manuals for confession. In Middle Low German originals that cannot be traced back to a Latin model text, the transition of *iunckfrouwe* from a term for men to either a gender-neutral or a female term is apparent, especially concerning the Sixth Commandment.

> Hefstu gesundighet mit megeden edder mit knechten, de doch de iuncvrouwschop vor vorloren hebben? [...] Hefstu iunckfrouwen bedrogen edder myt gewalt berouet erer iuncvrouwschop? Hefstu dyne iuncvrouweschop mit willen verloren? [...] Hefstu gesundighet mit presteren, mit monniken, edder myt nonen?[55]
>
> [Have you sinned with maidens or servants who had previously lost their virginity? ... Have you betrayed virgins or violently taken their virginity? Have you lost your virginity voluntarily? ... Have you sinned with priests, with monks or nuns?]

In these confessional inquiries, virginity obviously means the status of sexual inexperience, for both men and women. A connection between virginity and social status is also apparent, since the fact that the servants might have lost their virginity before having intercourse with their landlord is mentioned separately. Virginity is something both men and women need to guard, but it is not synonymous with living in an order or having taken vows of chastity. Even though virginity does not have the rank of the highest order—or an order at all—in this conception it is still more significant and appealing than marriage or widowhood: similar and parallel questions concerning the chastity of widows and married people are not to be found in the manuals for confession.

The further away from a Latin tradition a text is, the stronger is the notion of the *iunckfrowe* as a young woman—and thereby her placement within the laywoman model of virgin—wife—widow. In the Lübeck version of *Dodes Dantz*, the virgin is a young woman who definitely intends to marry in the near future. Rolf Dreier sees the female representatives in the *Dodes Dantz*-cycles as "hollow caricatures who are guilty of naïve

[55] Licht der Seelen, fol. 34r–35v.

vanity, arrogance and lust, not as an order but as a gender."[56] In the presentation of the virgin, this is certainly true, since the notion of virginity as an order and as a moral choice has disappeared entirely. Death accuses her of dancing and singing too much, and two thirds of his speech to the virgin is made up of possible first names of other virgins who like to dance with her. Nonetheless, even in this unmistakable notion of virginity as female adolescence, the idea of virginity as an order is present, as Death mentions the Virgin Mary who is supposed to have been an example to all virgins during her youth.[57]

But traces of the moral tripartition that sees virginity as the highest possible stage of spiritual merit are to be found in this vernacular text as well: the nun mentions that she hopes to receive *der iunckfrowen krantz*, which means that she hopes to receive a reward for her choice to remain sexually inactive. The general difference between virginity as a passing stage and virginity as a choice or an order is not reflected in the terminology, though, as both concepts are called *iunckfrowe*.

The use of the term "virginity" is significantly different in the texts that follow a Latin tradition than it is in the Middle Low German originals. In the Latin tradition, virgins can be male or female, and they occupy a status based on their moral decision: this idea derives from the moral tripartition in the concept *virgines—continentes—coniugati*. However, *iunckfrouwe* is not synonymous with "monk" or "nun", since many of the translated bestsellers that deal with virgin life and life in a monastery do not use it as a term for addressing or describing their public. In the Middle Low German originals, the equating of the virgin with a young woman is more pronounced, and as a result the concept of virginity as an order is completely lost, entirely in keeping with the Anglo-Saxon literary texts that define different codes of conduct for each woman in each of her stages of life.[58]

"Virgin" in Middle Low German could have different connotations and meanings in different texts: monastic life for men and women, a general striving for spiritual enlightenment in life or simply youth. None of the concepts seems to have been predominant, which is to say, the close intertwining of a moral status with a social status had disappeared in

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[56] Dreier, Rolf P. *Der Totentanz: Ein Motiv der kirchlichen Kunst als Projektionsfläche für profane Botschaften* (*1425–1650*). Leiden, 2010, 122.

[57] Dodes Dantz, Lübeck 1496, fol. 29r.

[58] Hallissy, Margaret. *Clean maids, true wives, steadfast widows: Chaucer's women and medieval codes of conduct.* Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1993, 1.

the semantics of virginity. But still, there are a few treatises in Middle Low German lay didactical literature dealing with virgin life and, regarding social imagery, this raises the question of how the "virgin order" is conceptualized—as a moral choice, as a social order or as a metaphor for society.

Audi filia / Hore dochter

As indicated above, the semantics of virginity do not allow for an automatic distinction between virginity as an order that people of both genders can access voluntarily, on the one hand, and the complete enclosure in a monastic order, on the other hand, probably because inhabitants of semi-religious communities were among the intended reading public or as a result of combining the two different ordering models. This distinction is, however, crucial if the virgin is to be read as a trope: is it a personification of an entire order or a personification of the entire society? Since formally entering a monastic order established a person's membership in the clergy, which remained a very significant change of status, the connection between virginity and monastic life needs to be further clarified on the semantic level. The few Middle Low German books that include treatises on monastic life and/or virginity should help to clarify this relationship.

One text that is relevant in this context is the anonymous treatise *Audi filia*, printed as an appendix to an explanation of the Decalogue from Lübeck. St. Jerome's *Letter to Eustachium*, which was the first to use the Bible quotation *Audi filia* as an introduction to a guideline for virgins, is not directly or indirectly quoted in the Middle Low German *Audi filia* / *Hore dochter* text. The latter's model remains unknown: the text itself does not claim any direct sources, does not identify an author and overall stands in the tradition of the anonymous Middle Low German catechetical texts.

The introduction identifies the ambivalence that existed regarding the necessity to enter an order to remain a virgin:

> Item in desseme boke vindest du eene gude lere / wo ene iuncfruwe eren staet wol holden schal na deme willen gades / besunderen in den closteren.[59]
>
> [Likewise, in this book you will find good advice about how a virgin is supposed to keep her order according to God's will, especially in the monasteries.]

[59] Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 274r.

Monastic life seems to be the preferred, but not the only option for a virgin life. The gender of the virgin goes unmentioned here and remains unclear throughout the text. The terms used are *dochter, brud, iunckfrauw*[60]—all used for females in non-religious texts but potentially also indicating males—however, it is not possible to determine if these can also refer to male representatives of the virgin order in the domain of bridal mysticism. In *Audi filia* virginity is ascribed both to Mary, Mother of God, and to Christ himself: this hints at the possibility for gender transgression within the concept.[61]

Virginity is a concept open both for gender transgression and for the transgression of social orders since it rejects the entire world and its boundaries, a concept of monastic life that leads back to the original ideals of the Benedictine Rule. Nobility and high birth are explicitly rejected as signs of a superior status, and the tracing of humankind back to Adam and Eve is used as an argument for a general equality of all people, calling to mind the phrase used in the peasants' uprising about "the time when Adam delved and Eve span, who was then a gentleman?"[62] *Audi filia* puts it this way:

> De drydde regule, dreech dy nicht vnde verbeff dy nit in der eddelheyt dines vleisches, wente twe mynschen hefft god geschapen in dem anbeginne der werlde, dar alle minschen ortsprunkliken her kamen sint. Hyrumme achte nicht den adel des vleisches, men meer den adel des geistes de sik van dogeden gesaket hefft.[63]
>
> [The third rule, do not rely on and fasten onto the nobility of your flesh, since God created two humans in the beginning of the world, from which all people originally descended. Because of this, do not honor the nobility of the flesh, but rather the nobility of the spirit, which derives from virtues.]

The focus on an order of virtues instead of an order of birth privileges might very well be an actualization of the concept of the virgin order as the highest stage of merit, one which relies upon free will and a voluntary decision to maintain this status. The concept of virginity as an order is

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60 "Dit spreke ik to dy de du wult eene iunckfruwe unde bruth christi wesen und nicht ene vruwe desser werlde [. . .] Hyr ut machst du merken leue dochter." Ibid., fol. 274r.

61 "Ene iuncfruwe hefft he to eener moder gekoren, wente he ok suluest iuncfruwe to ewighen tydden bliuen wolde." Ibid.

62 *Thesaurus proverbiorum Medii Aevi: Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalters. Bd. 1, A–Birne*. Ed. by Samuel Singer. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995, 32.

63 Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 303v.

strengthened by the use of the term *regula* or *regele* for the obligations virgins must fulfil in order to please their groom.[64]

While the rules—*regele*—explained in the Middle Low German *Audi filia* contextualize virginity as an order in the sense of a fixed group, it is not clear that the order need be a monastic order. While the fulfilment of the rules might be impossible while living entirely in the world, it would certainly be possible to follow the rule for virgins articulated here as a member of a semi-religious community, without having taken the vows of a monastic order. This option is open to both genders, as is the decision to enter a monastery. The *Audi filia*, as such, provides no fixed metaphorical place for the virgin within the given social order. The fact that the rule for virgins is printed and distributed along with an explanation of the Decalogue strengthens the impression that the guidelines for an overall virtuous life are meant to apply to all humans, even if those living according to a monastic rule do more to ensure their salvation, just as is the case in the confessional books, where monastic life is defined as something additional that can be done as a way of pleasing God that goes beyond what other Christians who follow His law must do. Robert Bast interprets the fact that fifteenth-century catechetical advice for laypeople used the terminology common in monastic advice as the consequence of monastic authors writing about the world they knew best, but when dealing with the virgin life and its rules, this application of monastic ideals to a lay audience resulted in a serious decline in both the social status formerly ascribed to the virgin order and in its exclusivity.[65] The virgin, as a metaphor for the monastic order and consequently for the highest order of merit, has gone beyond the limits of her order and she (or he) is now living among the other orders. The equating of monastic life with other forms of life in terms of spiritual merit goes hand in hand with the equating of noble birth in favor of a hierarchy based on virtue. The presentation of the concept of virginity as a moral decision with no visible consequences in daily life, as well as the terminology that frames it in the *Audi filia*, points to a semantic shift, whereby the virgin has lost her place at the top of the social order based on traditional metaphors drawn from the parable of the sower and from the righteous men Noah, Job and Daniel. Instead, the virgin "order" refers to a social position that claims

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64 "Hyr vernym du iuncfruwe etlike regule de ik dy lere, updat du wol behagest dynem brudegame […]" Ibid., fol. 27r.

65 Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 47.

authority on the basis of an advance in spiritual development rather than on formal incorporation into a monastery. For women in particular, this is a crucial shift: with the secular clergy not being an option for them, the rejection of the world by entering a monastery had paradoxically formerly been the only option open to women for reaching a social position that resembled in importance that of the clerical order. Enclosure was the price they had to pay in order to be able to obtain a socially accepted and valued position outside of marriage. Those female monasteries that attempted to permit their members both the status provided by enclosure and relative freedom of movement among the secular communities became targets of male attempts to regain control: most of the attempted reforms of the Windesheim and Bursfeld congregations targeting female monasteries identified the non-observance of enclosure as a basis for reform.[66] The importance of this issue in late medieval conflicts around monastery reforms indicates a need to reinforce boundaries that had been diminished and blurred. This same blurring is visible in the Middle Low German semantics addressing virginity. As well, findings addressing the multiple semantics surrounding virgins and virginity correspond to the results of studies of the Anglo-Saxon penitential literature of the Late Middle Ages in which Cordelia Beattie, for example, has detected seven different social categories operative within the context of chastity, without, however, being able to assign a clearly visible moral or social hierarchy to them.[67]

The *Audi filia* is a text that cannot be traced back to a Latin original, and there are other texts in this category that blur the boundaries between monastic life and general devotion, using a broad concept of virginity. A similar equating of monastic life with a life of celibacy in general, on the one hand, and life in the world on the basis of certain rules of chastity or based on certain virtues in general, on the other hand, is to be found in *De witte lilien der kuscheyt*.[68]

The lily has been used as a symbol of virginity ever since antiquity. St. Ambrose actually saw it as a symbol of Christ, not for male or female members of a monastic order. In the didactical literature of the fifteenth

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[66] Schmidt, Hans Joachim. "Widerstand von Frauen gegen Reformen." In *Fromme Frauen—unbequeme Frauen? Weibliches Religiosentum im Mittelalter*. Ed. by Edeltraud Klueting, 143–189. Hildesheim: Olms, 2006, ibid., 169.

[67] Beattie, *Medieval Single Women*, 61.

[68] Cf. the introduction of this study and the appendix for bibliographic information.

century, this flower stands for innocence in general[69]—an important shift in meaning from virginity in a sexual context to a general virtue accessible regardless of family status. In the *Witte lilien* treatise each virtue a virgin requires is represented by one of the lily's petals: the fear of touching others, temperance in eating and drinking, humble dress, shame of speaking and acting, habitually remaining indoors, and avoiding places and people threatening to one's virginity. To provide the text with the necessary authority, the most important authors on virginity, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, are mentioned, although no clear indication of which of the Church Fathers' texts were used as sources. The interpretation of virgin virtues in *Witte lilien* has little to do with the works of Ambrose on the topic: the *De virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem*, which defends the institution of virginity against pagan beliefs in three books with several exempla; the treatise *De virginitate*, which defends his reverence for virginity against those who accuse him of diminishing the importance of marriage; *Exhortatio virginitatis; De institutione virginis*; and *De viduis*. In none of these does Ambrose use the allegory of the lily. Moreover, Ambrose's theological argument for virginity in connection with the immaculate body of Christ or the *vita angelica* is not a source for reflection. The *Witte lilien* presents concrete guidelines for a virgin daily life and not a theological basis for the ideal of virginity. Even the image of the virgin as the bride of Christ, which Ambrose frequently uses and develops based on an exegesis of the Song of Songs,[70] remains unaddressed in this late medieval text. One of Ambrose's major points is that the virgin—and the widow—is free from profane concerns and therefore, having conquered her physical desires, is free to devote herself entirely to God. The Church Father's texts aimed to defend the Christian concept of virginity in a period when married lay life was ranked higher and considered the most virtuous—this apologetic function is lost entirely in the late medieval discourse on virginity. In the *Witte lilien*, the virgin is anything but free. On the contrary, she constantly needs to struggle to be free from desire, and her virgin status is especially endangered. Other metaphors frequently used by Ambrose, but not in the *Witte lilien*, are, for example, the comparison of the virgins to the bees, his estimation of virginity as compared to marriage, metaphors from the Song of Songs regarding bridal mysticism and the connection between

[69] Pfister-Burkhalter, Margarete. "Lilie." *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie III*, 100–102.
[70] Ambrosius. *De virginibus*. Ed. by Peter Dückers. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009, 162–167.

virginity and martyrdom.[71] St. Ambrose's texts on virginity cannot be a direct source for the *Witte lilien* compilation, which lacks a clear connection to the learned discourse on virginity. *Witte lilien* thus presents a specific Middle Low German discourse on a traditional clerical and learned topic, which also has an impact on its use of the terminology for virgins.

The term *iunkfrouwe* is used throughout the late medieval text, but in contrast to the aforementioned examples where the Middle Low German term is not gender-specific, the *Witte lilien* clearly sees the virgin as female—at least if a heterosexual norm for men and women is taken as a given. The dangers of contact with men are described in the first article dedicated to the virgins:

> [...] also dat se nenen mansznamen wo na he eer ock in vruntscop vorwant sy lychtlyken antaste effte by der bloten hanth an grype, unde ok sik suluest an redelyke noet nicht an taste. Darumme ysset erlyk dat geistlike lΦde nicht naket to bedde gaen [...][72]
>
> [So that she will not let herself be touched even in passing by any male person, no matter how much he might be connected to her in friendship, or let herself be touched with his bare hand, nor touch herself without a good reason. That is the reason why spiritual people do not go to bed naked...]

The virgin is not supposed to let any man touch her or touch herself, and the fact that people living a monastic life do not go to be naked serves as an additional argument. The monastic community as such serves as an example for the virgins, who are clearly female (or homosexual). Men are constantly identified as the species from which danger emanates, even clerical men: in the last chapter about avoiding threats to virginity, the virgin is advised *dat se to nenen man wo hillich de ock sy in hemelike stede alleyne enkome* [that she shall never be alone with any man in a secret place, as holy a man as he might be].[73] The general underlying tone is: do not trust any man, do not even trust the clergy, they are all threats to a virtuous life. What exactly might happen as a result of contact with men is not, however, specified.

Even though these passages present the virgin as female in the context of heterosexual norms of desire, there are other passages where the text directs similar advice to men: St. Augustine is quoted concerning the

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[71] Dückers, Peter. "Einleitung." In Ambrosius, *De virginibus*, 7–71; with a survey of Ambrose's texts on virginity.

[72] Witte lilien, fol. 1r.

[73] Ibid., fol. 5v.

manual labor of monks—*monnike* (5r)—an exemplum deals with the vanity of a prior in a monastery (3v), and at the very end of the text, the admonition to remain chaste addresses both men and women:

> Darumme eyn yowelck man vnde wyff de syne reynicheyt leeff hefft de vlyte sick also to holden we hyr vor gheschreuen steyt.[74]
>
> [Because of this, any man or woman who loves his/her purity shall be eager to live in the way described above.]

This last sentence is remarkable in several regards, as it uses the term *wyff* for a woman who wants to remain chaste, a term usually reserved for married women, not unmarried or widowed women. As a result, any idea that the text is set in a monastic context collapses completely.

Not only is the status of the virgin as an order unclear in the *Witte lilien* treatise, so is the virgin's gender. Even though the text cannot be traced back to concrete Latin texts, given the compilation method, which draws on florilegia and unknown Latin models, the ambiguity of the concept of virginity in terms of gender in the Middle Low German text is similar to the ambiguity of the texts of the Church Fathers: Ambrose, allegedly the primary source, directed his work entirely to women, among them his sister Marcelliana, but his advice was applied in male communities as well, since it describes standard problems faced by those who embrace the monastic way of life, such as the difficulty of avoiding bad thoughts without the distraction of manual labor. Jerome's letter to Eustachia is also quoted, and the implications of the Latin terms *virgo/virginitas* lead, when translated into the Middle Low German *iuncfrowschop*, to an ambiguity in terms of gender: both genders should remain chaste, but when addressing the threats to chastity, virgins are female and males the source of the threats.

Both these notions—the gender-neutral character of the virgin and the conceptualization of virginity as a status rather than a social order, thereby constituting an important image of a section of society—disappear when the virgin order is given a status parallel to that of monastic life.

Considering the applied model of society, the Middle Low German texts seem to make a parallel use of the traditional moral tripartition and the laywomen model: it is also the case that both a gendered and a non-gendered use of the term "virgin" are possible. Young women, unmarried women, unmarried men, chaste men or women, monastic people—in

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[74] Ibid., fol. 6v.

Middle Low German, *iunckvrouwe* can potentially refer to any of these, as can the even more explicitly gender-neutral term, *iunckmynsche*. That the texts seem to be semantically unified to the medieval reader in spite of this terminological blurriness is probably because the virgin does not appear in any of the tripartite models, but is an entirely separate category, which not only represents a section of society—as part of a metonymic trope or a personification—but also the moral attributes demanded of her that apply to all Christians. Virginity thus shifts from a designation of a socially fixed group to a general metaphorical description of a central ideal for all of Christian society. This also explains the subordinate status of the widow in Middle Low German didactical literature: her original function as a moral example for those living in chastity after a sexually active life and the importance of constantly doing penance are subsumed into the category of the virgin. To provide evidence that supports this thesis, the terminology surrounding the widow will be investigated in the same way, even though there are far fewer examples available than is the case for the virgin.

The Widow

The widow is primarily a gender-specific term in Middle Low German: *wedewe* or *wedewersche* refers to a widow, while *wedewere* refers to a widower. As is the case for the terminology for married people, there is also the combination of the adjective *wedewelike* with *stole*, "chair/seat," meaning the widowed status for both genders.[75] The widow has been analyzed as the most striking personification of the culture of penitence during the Early Middle Ages. Nothing of this prominence seems to remain in late medieval didactical literature—the widow is barely mentioned. The same discrepancy between the importance of the widow in normative texts, on the one hand, and the lack of interest in the widow in narrative and diplomatic texts, on the other hand, has been observed by Benoît-Michel Tock in a corpus of Latin texts from Belgium, dating 800–1200.[76] This does not mean that late medieval circumstances had in general rendered the culture of penitence insignificant: in fact, penitence, its prerogatives and correct exercise, is one of the most hotly debated topics in lay didactical

[75] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch V*, 647.

[76] Tock, Benoît-Michel. "L'image des veuves dans la littérature médiolatine belge du VIII^{e} au XII^{e} siècle." In Parisse, ed. *Veuves et veuvage*, 37–48.

literature. However, it is not linked to the figure of the widow, just as the figure of the virgin is no longer linked to monastic life.

The medieval doctrine on widowhood derived from the exegesis of three *loci classici* in the New Testament. Two are from the letters of St. Paul, one about morality among the members of the community (1 Cor 7:8–9, 7:39–40), the other about the social role of the widows within their families and within the community (1 Tim 5:3–16).[77] The third is the female prophet Anna/Hannah (Lk 2:36–38) who met the child Jesus in the temple. According to the Gospel, she was eighty-four years old and had lost her husband after only seven years of marriage. She had never remarried, but spent her life engaged in ascetic practices and prayer. Anna was presented as an exemplary representative of the status of widows in commentaries on the Gospel, and Ambrose mentioned her in his treatise *De viduis*,[78] but by the Late Middle Ages the widow Anna or Hannah seems to have been almost forgotten. The truly famous Anna was the mother of the Virgin Mary from apocryphal texts, and she metaphorized the married woman and mother, for example, in devotional form as *Anna selbdritt*, presenting the grandmother, the mother and the infant Jesus.[79] Christ's grandmother had been married three times before she gave birth to Mary, so she certainly could not be used to promote remaining unmarried: still, late medieval iconography sometimes uses her as the first among the holy widows. Veneration for Anna the widowed prophet as a potential figure of identification for widows and as their spiritual example seems not to have led to her veneration on a larger scale during the Late Middle Ages. In Erhard Groß' and Felix Fabri's High German didactical texts directed to widows—yet another difference in the textual production in the two language zones—Anna the widow is occasionally used as an example, along with women from the Old Testament such as Judith, but not in the context of Christian saints and the virtues represented by them.[80] Probably the similarity of her name to that of the famous mother of Mary led to the slight interest that the widowed Anna received—alternatively, the ideal of not remarrying may have been overshadowed by the ideal of remarrying in order to bear fruit.

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[77] Rädle, Fidel. "Einige Bemerkungen zur Bewertung der Witwenschaft in der patristischen und frühmittelalterlichen Theologie. Mit ausgewählten Texten." In *ibid*., 18–19.

[78] Ibid., 19–20.

[79] Cf. Dörfler-Dierken, Angelika. *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anna in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992.

[80] Kruse, Britta-Juliane. *Witwen: Kulturgeschichte eines Standes in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2007, 45; 59; 66.

In Middle Low German didactical literature, the few examples of advice to widows are found in translated bestsellers, while original Middle Low German catechetical advice does not deal with the widow at all—occasionally, "widows and orphans" are mentioned as representatives of the poor, but not the widow as a moral category. An exception is the compilation *Licht der Seelen*, in which widows are assigned a chapter regarding specific interrogations during confession: whether they have failed to rule over their servants properly, have been idle for a long time, have uttered many vain words, have been wearing immodest clothing or have failed to carry out acts of mercy.[81] These questions point to the widow's duty to be humble and pious, but the advice does not differ substantially from that which might be given to women in general.

Also in many translated bestsellers, the widow is simply a woman who has lost her husband, and she is occasionally advised to remain in that state, but not for moral reasons. The moral basis for not marrying had, by this time, disappeared to such an extent that chastity does not constitute an argument for the widow not remarrying. Rather, the widow who wishes to remarry is subject to ridicule, as younger men in particular would probably only marry her for money, not for herself. Poor women, for whom this argument does not apply, are also advised to stay unmarried, with no reason offered—given that these women were not part of the intended reading public, this inconsistency is not surprising. Additionally, one of the few texts that includes explicit advice for widows, the *Schone lefflike lere*, is not addressed to the women themselves but to their sons, who are asked to keep their mothers from a potentially damaging remarriage—the economic reasons for this are obvious, as is the concern about losing one's face in connection with one's mother's foolish actions. Nonetheless, a purely moral argument against remarriage is lacking.[82]

In the Middle Low German adaptation of the *Liber de ludo scacorum*, the figure of the queen is clarified using a widow named Anne as an example. Widowed at a young age, her friends and relatives wanted her to remarry but she refuses, pointing to the risk of ending up with a husband that would not be as good as the previous one (*redelick unde vrut*)[83]—her friends understand and let her retain her chastity. The widow's name calls

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[81] Licht der Seelen, fol. 48v.

[82] "Item wil dyn moder eynen anderen man nemen wen se to eren iaren kamen ys, so deyt se gantz dorliken [. . .] Dith sy den riken wedwen gesecht vnde den armen segghe ick dat se alleyne blyuen." Schone lefflike lere, cit. after Cossar, 327, 21–28.

[83] Schakspel, fol. 16v.

to mind the eighty-four-year-old prophetess who saw the child Jesus in the temple and claimed him to be the Messiah. But the originally moral category of the widow is primarily used to describe a female life choice.

A striking example of the loss of the close connection between the widow and the penitential state is to be found in the *Hemmelsche funtgrove* by the Augustinian Johannes of Paltz. He names the three women who were present at the Crucifixion according to John 19:25 who, interestingly enough according to apocryphal tradition, are the three daughters of Anna from her three marriages:

> Desse dre personen beduden dre stend: Maria, de moder goddes, bedudet de junckfrouwen, Maria Cleophae de weedewen, Maria Magdalena de böter; edder: Maria Magdalena bedudet de anhever, Maria Cleophae de tonemer und Maria, de moder goddes, bedudet de vullenkamen mynschen.[84]
>
> [These three persons represent three orders: Maria, mother of God, represents the virgins, Maria Cleophae, the widows, Maria Magdalene, the penitents, or: Maria Magdalena represents the beginners, Maria Cleophae the accumulators and Maria, mother of God represents the perfect people.]

The three orders—virgins, widows and penitents—and the explanation, identifying them as beginners, accumulators and perfect people, points to a semantic of moral tripartition similar to the one found in the treatise about monastic life, *Ynkere to gode*, though without its functional explanation of the three orders related to different kinds of work within the monastery and here presented as a personification. Married people do not occupy a space in this hierarchy at all, but they all mark stages in striving for a perfect life that can only be achieved in connection to monastic life and the inner and outer rejection of the world. Even though it is not a treatise in favor of monastic life, the *Hemmelsche funtgrove* is part of the discourse of translated bestsellers, written by an identified monk for a noble layperson and showing distinct characteristics of clerical ideology. But it also indicates how one model of differentiation can mean entirely different things based on context: without the monastic lifestyle and guidance, such as that provided in *Ynkere to gode*, the tripartition of beginners, accumulators and perfect people formulates a moral standard valid for all Christians. The three Marys personify all of Christianity, their hierarchical order flowing from St. Anna's three marriages and the order of virtues required for a Christian life.

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[84] De hemmelsche funtgrove, fol. 21r.

In this way, the narrow set of examples of tripartition found in Middle Low German didactical literature comes full circle, and some serious deviations from what previous scholarship has claimed about the dominance of tripartite divisions in medieval texts are exposed. Even though the number three is a stylistic medium often used in religious writing, the division of society into three representatives—metonymic or personifications—is nearly impossible to detect within the corpus of the incunabula and early printings. With the exception of the *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, they are never used as the structural basis for an entire text and, in this single example, not one but multiple tripartite divisions, sometimes contradicting each other, are used and combined. Evidence of pure functional or moral tripartitions is entirely lacking, as is the development of the exegesis of the moral tripartition in general: the parable of the sower and the three righteous men in the Book of Ezekiel hardly appear in lay didactical literature. The meaning of the terms and concepts has shifted from describing a hierarchy of social orders to a society where the family is the nucleus and point of reference for all other relations. Marriage is a metaphor often included in connection with other metaphors, namely, those that depict hierarchy and power in terms of the relation of husband and wife, but never within a tripartite division. Virgin life—that is, in its moral conception, monastic life—is barely debated in the majority of Middle Low German didactical texts, and neither is widowhood—that is, the figure of the widow as a metaphor for the penitential state. Every imaginable tripartite division was developed and used to support and convey a dedicated clerical ideology, sometimes favoring monks, sometimes prelates, but always asserting those groups' superior access to knowledge, virtue and, therefore, also to authority. One possible explanation for the lack of tripartite rhetorical forms pinpoints the declining importance of the clergy and the ideology supporting it. Another assumes the lack of evidence of tripartite forms is specific to Middle Low German lay didactical literature, which is generally heavily shaped by the local vernacular discourse, and thus has little connection to the discourse in which tripartite divisions are found—but this explanation remains speculation as long as there are no data from other vernacular regions that can be used for comparison.

Regarding the gendered character of the terms used for the originally moral categories, an interesting shift has occurred between the Latin terms and the Middle Low German terms. A virgin can be either male or female, a married person is most likely to be male and a widow is always female. This points to the interconnection of linguistic, ideological and

juridical frameworks: in a society where the most powerful people were lay non-noble male heads of households who received status, influence and a weighty legal position through marriage, the head of a household is also the most prominent figure in didactical texts. When a social status denotes importance and power, it is coded as male. In the case of a social status that is losing its significance, such as monastic life, the words denoting it are gender-neutral or indicate a male who has female characteristics. A social status that is determined by its members' weak legal situation, such as widows, is uninteresting and thus not represented in lay didactical literature.

Neither the source domains nor the target domains of the few existing tripartite divisions have a common denominator. The source domains can be widely differing groups of three: the three women at the Cross or the three righteous men from the Old Testament as personifications are rare, but can be found; likewise, the three representatives, the penitents, the rulers and the workers—and even the single metaphoric representative, the virgin—for all of Christianity. The target domain shifts considerably as well from "all Christians" through the righteous among the Christians to Christian women. But the assembled inconsistencies in the rhetorical forms do not necessarily indicate a dissolution of traditional forms, and thereby a general loss of meaning: they can also be read as attempts to solve problems connected to the traditional forms. The constant combination of moral and functional principles in the target areas actually solves a semantic and logical break that the traditional functional tripartition opened up: the inconsistency of not taking secular and ecclesiastical authority into account when using functional distinctions for society.

Characteristic of the late medieval use of tripartite metaphors for society is a strong concept of exclusion and hierarchy based on the principles of functionality for a monastery or for the entire society, or based on an order of virtues. The exclusion of non-Christians, sinners and, in some models, women is not directly addressed in the texts dealing with tripartite divisions, but it is contained in the rhetorical figure itself, as well as in its target area. This connection of a strictly regulated rhetorical form that includes a hierarchy with principles of exclusion is also clearly visible in a metaphor that is much more prominent in the source corpus than in any tripartite division—the angelic choirs.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NINE CHOIRS OF ANGELS

One of the most popular metaphors for society in Middle Low German lay didactical literature was the nine choirs of angels, an image that combines functional distinctions of social groups with those based on spiritual merit. The basic idea is the ordering of the angelic choirs into three times three, which can be developed into a parallel positioning of groups of three times nine—angels, humans and demons. The humans, squeezed in between angels and demons, will either be taken up into the angelic choirs after their death or will descend into one of the demonic choirs, which derived from the fall of Lucifer and his fellows from the initial angelic choirs. The choirs are ordered hierarchically, and superior merit results in the ascendance into a higher choir, while more profound sins have the opposite effect. As the concept of the nine choirs of angels was developed as a metaphor for the different ecclesiastical ranks and offices and not for society in general, the metaphor originally focused entirely on the clergy. Nonetheless, it was adopted and used as a metaphor for society throughout the Late Middle Ages. The motif played a significant role in the symbolic actions of Benedictine monks, their liturgy and monastic hierarchies.[1] Within ecclesiastical hierarchies in general, the angelic choirs were used as a role model to be followed in order to imitate the angel's striving for a union with God. But the adaptation of this hierarchy as a metaphor for the lay society of the fifteenth century required major adjustments, taking up the variants of the motif from Latin and vernacular traditions:

source domain	*target domain*
nine choirs of angels	"society"/Holy Roman Empire/ the righteous
nine choirs of angels and humans	the righteous Christians
nine choirs of angels, humans and demons	Christians and Jews

[1] Sonntag, Jörg. *Klosterleben im Spiegel des Zeichenhaften: Symbolisches Denken und Handeln hochmittelalterlicher Mönche zwischen Dauer und Wandel, Regel und Gewohnheit*. Berlin: LIT, 2008, 166.

Source domain and target domain can both vary, but the names and number of the angels always remain stable, while the groups of humans who are going to ascend into the different choirs again varies. The assignment of the heavenly hierarchies to secular hierarchies—and thus the legitimacy of the latter—is entirely unstable throughout the Middle Ages, and Latin and vernacular treatments differ from each other significantly. A complete study of the development of the motif of angelic choirs—which should address its numerous artistic representations as well—is lacking; however, Wilhelm Maurer has presented an extensive collection of material on the treatment of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite as a precursor to the Protestant theory of the three estates,[2] and Giles Constable gives a number of examples of the use of the choirs as an ordering scheme in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[3] Why exactly these scholars see the nine choirs as almost synonymous with functional tripartition is difficult to understand, since the main feature of the choirs is not the number three (or three times three) and is certainly not the functional division but the parallel conceptualization of orders in heaven, on earth and in hell, an eschatological dimension that functional tripartition lacks entirely. The tradition of the motif and its exegesis in the Latin and the vernacular tradition include the aspects crucial for the Middle Low German treatment: the parallel positioning of angels and humans, the addition of demonic choirs and the more or less obvious assignment of social groups to the angelic choirs.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite was the first—or at least the most prominent and influential[4]—to systematize secular and heavenly hierarchies into two groups of nine each.[5] In his work on the heavenly hierarchy dated to the fifth century, he combined different biblical passages that include names of angels with a scheme that he saw as a repetition of the triadic structure of the Trinitarian God Himself (section VI–X). The distinction of the angelic choirs followed a classification that is to a certain degree functional, insofar as the author used scattered information in biblical texts to deduce the names of the angels from both etymology and their activities. For example, Seraphim, "the burning ones," are said to burn with a love for God exclusively. Hence, the descending hierarchy also sheds light on what the author conceived of as superior activities

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[2] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 45–118.

[3] Constable, *Three Studies*, 290–292.

[4] Krauss, Heinrich. *Die Engel: Überlieferung, Gestalt, Deutung*. München: Beck, 2005, 66, mentions nine choirs of angels in a prayer by Cyril of Jerusalem as a potential predecessor.

[5] Dionysius. *De coelesti hierarchia, de ecclesiastica hierarchia, de mystica theologia, epistulae*. Ed. by Günter Heil. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991.

and functions. The devaluation of activities within the heavenly hierarchy seems to be connected to an increasing proximity to the human sphere: while the highest choirs (Seraphim, Cherubim and Throni) only exist in order to praise God, the lowest three (Virtutes, Archangelis and Angelis) act as messengers and are assumed to be the guardian angels of humans.

The implicit identification of hierarchy and *ordo*, the ecclesiastical ordination and the order of the cosmos, is important to the adaptation of the choirs of angels as a system of social ordering, and therefore as a metaphor for society—a connection that Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite did not make explicit.[6] In Pseudo-Dionysius' writings, *hierarchia* is mainly used as a generic term for priesthood as an order and as a function. At the same time, *hierarchia* indicates a general organizing principle—the Latin *ordo*—as well as every single location within this ordering principle.[7] In the second part of his work, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Pseudo-Dionysius applied this principle of ordering to the Church. Here his triplets are baptism, the Eucharist and ordination; bishops, priests and liturgists; monks, community and penitents.

Pseudo-Dionysius thereby structured his metaphor for society according to the sacraments—the consecration of priests and the basic distinction of receiving and administering the sacrament are the factors relevant for differentiating the groups. A distinct clerical ideology shapes this metaphor, but it occurred in a historical phase when the secular clergy had only recently received considerable privileges and when it was still possible to count the monks among the laity, and thereby as part of the lower, receiving orders.[8]

The hierarchies according to Pseudo-Dionysius

heavenly hierarchy	ecclesiastical hierarchy
Seraphim	baptism
Cherubim	Eucharist
Throni	ordination
Dominationes	bishops
Potestates	priests
Principatus	liturgists
Virtutes	monks
Archangelis	community
Angelis	penitents

[6] Constable, *Three studies*, 257.
[7] Heil, Günter. "Einleitung." In Dionysius, *De coelesti hierarchia*, 1–27, ibid., 1–2.
[8] Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 66.

The organization of the clerical orders in two times three grades metaphorizes a privileged oligarchy relying on the power to administer the sacrament. The connection to the transcendent sphere of angels reinforces the ideological support for the clergy. But as the reception of the metaphor shows, the heavenly part—nine choirs of angels—is much more stable up to the Late Middle Ages than the ecclesiastical part, even if the numerous commentators on Pseudo-Dionysius throughout the Early and High Middle Ages advanced a clerical ideology.

Thomas Aquinas took on and canonized the Pseudo-Dionysian classification of the angels in the *Summa theologica*.[9] He combined it with a division of the *civitas* into three *ordines: ordo iudicandum, ordo pugnantium, ordo laborantium in agris*, and another division into *principium, medium*, and *finis*. Thomas explicitly compared the functions in the state with the functions of the angels based on the Areopagite.[10] The angelic hierarchy is used inter alia for clarifying the obligations the higher Church offices—which resemble the top choirs of angels in having a broader knowledge of the divine—have to the lower offices, which they instruct. Accordingly, those who hold a teaching office know more about issues of belief than do others.[11]

Thomas, however, rejects the possibility—still found in Pseudo-Dionysius' work—that people may ascend into the angelic choirs after their death based on their degree of merit in the ecclesiastical hierarchy due to his belief that angels and humans are of different natures. Humans are assumed to continue to maintain their nature after death, which makes a passage from human to angel impossible. Moreover, the same applies to the demons, for whom Thomas denies the possibility of a parallel hierarchy.[12] He believes that saints can be taken into the heavenly choirs, but in a separate group outside the nine-fold angelic hierarchy.[13] As we will see, this canonical interpretation differs considerably from the vernacular treatment.

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[9] Thomas Aquinas. "Summa theologica." In *Corpus Thomisticum*. Ed. by Enrique Alarcón. Pamplona: Ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis, 2001 (hereafter quoted as S. th.). I-I, q. 108, art. 1–5. The names of the angels art. 5.

[10] Luscombe, David E. "Thomas Aquinas and conceptions of Hierarchy in the 13th Century." In *Thomas von Aquin: Werk und Wirkung im Licht neuerer Forschungen*. Ed. by Albert Zimmermann and Clemens Kopp, 261–277. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988, ibid., 273.

[11] S. th. II-II, q. 2, art. 6 co.

[12] S. th. I-I, q. 109, art. 1.

[13] S. th. I-I, q. 108, art. 8.

Other commentators emphasized different aspects of the motif: in the writings of Gregory the Great, the choirs of angels refer to the ideal order of the monastic community, but also of the ecclesiastical community in general.[14] Bonaventura puts the functional aspect of the hierarchy of angels in the foreground: he assumes that people can ascend to the angelic choirs through the Pseudo-Dionysian stages of purification in the ecclesiastical hierarchies. Here, however—just as in the writings of the earlier theologians—a clear assignment of human merit and secular social groups to the celestial hierarchy is strictly avoided. Instead, the hierarchies of the angels are assigned to different modes that seek and honor the divine truth, resulting in three different forms of contemplation.[15]

The treatment of the nine choirs of angels was continued through the translations and glossae of the work of, among others, Thomas Gallus Vercelli, Robert Grosseteste, Albertus Magnus and Bonaventura.[16] The general theme of the choirs of angels had also previously been discussed in the works of Isidore of Seville, and Hilduin and Hincmar of Reims.[17] William of Auvergne made the first attempt at a consistent transfer of the choirs of angels motif to the political elite of France.[18] Jean Gerson summarized religious and governmental regulations using the Aristotelian concept of the *politeia*, combining an angelology influenced by the Areopagite with the basic theory of the rule of the king.[19]

All these approaches to the development of the motif of the angelic choirs share a concept of hierarchy as an organizing model. They all in some way position the celestial order parallel to the secular order and, since their main interest is the legitimacy of spiritual and, to a lesser extent, secular rule, the differentiation of the lower orders is rather limited and of less interest in these works. This emphasis shifts considerably in the vernacular treatment of the motif.

In German didactical texts and sermons, a specific area for the treatment of the motif of angelic choirs is the identification of the hierarchy with specific social groups in a way that is much clearer than is the case in the Latin scholastic treatment—the German-speaking treatment assumes

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[14] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 48–49.

[15] Bonaventura. *De triplici via.* Ed. by Marianne Schlosser. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1993, Liber III, cap. 14. De contemplatione, 172–175.

[16] Meinhardt, Helmut. "Dionysios Areopagites IV: Lateinische Übersetzungen." *LexMA* III, 1082–1087.

[17] Examples in Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 50–53.

[18] Ibid., 72–75.

[19] Ibid., 105.

or creates a stronger purpose for the order of the nine choirs as an ordering principle for the material world. While the core of scholastic treatment is the concept of the universe as an entity designed following a consistent ordering principle, the vernacular treatment of the heavenly hierarchies uses the angelic choirs as a metaphor for secular hierarchy. While the scholastic theories about the angelic choirs are developed in connection with angelology and cosmology, the vernacular treatment takes the step of using the image as a metaphor for society.

It is a rich vernacular tradition that connects the choirs of angels both to the choirs of demons and the celestial and material hierarchies in parallel. One example is the German sermons of Berthold of Regensburg, which Maurer sees as "a crucial progression of the Areopagite's teaching on the hierarchies into the social world of the thirteenth century."[20] In fact, the process of metaphorization is lucid here, with the source domain more or less stable, while the target domain shifts. Berthold speaks of both nine and ten choirs of angels, and as many human choirs: the tenth angelic choir belongs to the fallen angel Lucifer and is parallel to a tenth order of fallen humans—a similar interpretation is found in the Early High German *Wiener Genesis*.[21]

Two German sermons by Berthold that deal with the choirs of angels are known.[22] The significantly longer one formulates a group of ten choirs and focuses on the mutual obligations of the upper and lower orders within the hierarchical system on earth. In the following descriptions of the individual orders, what is required of each of them is specified, and whoever fails to meet these obligations will fall into the tenth choir, the demonic choir of Lucifer and his followers.

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[20] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 71.

[21] The Vienna Genesis names the choirs in the canonical form, but tells the story of their origin as follows: God created ten choirs, the last one named for Lucifer and together with him is fallen. Nine choirs of angels remain in heaven, the demons making up but one choir, and it has remained this way from the beginning of time until now. Edition of the Vienna Genesis Smits, Kathryn, ed. *Die frühmittelhochdeutsche Wiener Genesis. Kritische Ausgabe mit einem einleitenden Kommentar zur Überlieferung.* Berlin, Freiburg im Breisgau: Schmidt, 1972, the Lucifer story in lines 13ff.

[22] Berthold von Regensburg. "Von den 10 Chören der Engel und der Menschen." In *Vollständige Ausgabe seiner deutschen Predigten: Band 1.* Ed. by Franz Pfeiffer. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965, nr. X, 140–156; this sermon derives from tradition group X; additionally, there is one sermon "Von den neun Chören der Engel und der Menschen" from the scattered tradition, edited according to Codex cgm 5067 at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München in Richter, Dieter. *Die deutsche Überlieferung der Predigten Bertholds von Regensburg: Untersuchungen zur geistlichen Literatur des Spätmittelalters.* München: Beck, 1969, 267–270.

This tangible dimension of damnation is missing in the other shorter sermon by Berthold, which speaks of nine choirs, although here the objective of establishing positive and negative patterns of behavior representative of the orders remains the same. The division of the orders itself varies in the two sermons:

The division of social orders according to Berthold von Regensburg

"Von den zehn Chören"	"Von den neun Chören"
priests	monks
monks	clerics
secular rulers and judges	secular judges
all who work with clothing	all who weave, even with silver and gold
all who work with iron tools	all who work with masonry, even carpenters
merchants	all who work on the water or fight
all who sell food or drink	peasants
peasants	travelers on land or water
physicians and pharmacists	physicians and pharmacists
demons	

The division based on professional/functional principles is not entirely worked through in the text about the nine choirs: duplications occur, and despite the claim that "*mit den sechslay hantwerchen sint alle hanntverch begriffen*,"[23] [every craft is included in the six crafts], the lack of representation of the merchants is striking.

The German sermons of Berthold of Regensburg offer an early and most comprehensive evidence of a vernacular treatment of the Pseudo-Dionysian angelic choirs. They apply a pragmatic classification of the choirs not only to different degrees of spiritual merit, but also to social groups. Cosmological and Trinitarian considerations play no role here, and the same applies to the entire late medieval vernacular treatment found in lay didactical texts. Berthold of Regensburg employs the metaphor of the choirs of angels for a not entirely clerical, but generally ruling ideology, even if the "lower orders" take up two of the three triads, and thereby their quantitative representation within the hierarchy is much more realistic than that found in the Latin tradition. But the strict division between the three upper orders—monks, clerics, and secular rulers—points to an imagined

[23] Berthold von Regensburg. "Von den neun Chören der Engel und der Menschen." In Richter, *Die deutsche Überlieferung*, 269.

shared responsibility and rule, in which quantitative relations do not play a significant role. The dominance of the upper three orders is sanctified by their parallel position to that of the highest orders of angels. The metaphorization of the orders of society in the motif of the choirs of angels reproduces the ideology contained in the functional tripartition, where two ruling orders are supposed to protect the third one, which works for them in return, but fits it into a different form and numeric equation.[24] But still, in comparison to the earlier Latin models for the treatment of the angel motif, Berthold opens up the middle triad of angels to the lower classes, if the parallel positioning of the profane and the angelic orders is to be consistently conceived. The interest of the mendicant orders in order-specific didactics and preaching does not lead to a non-clerical or anti-clerical concept of society, and thus not to a non-traditional use of existing metaphors. But their interest in the distinctions within the lower classes opens a space for a more thorough representation of these classes, which consequently leads to a reevaluation of their roles. But, as the history of the treatment of the nine choirs shows, this specific metaphor is not flexible enough to include an entirely non-clerical ideology. As well, Berthold's interpretation is not canonical within the contemporary didactical discourse: Konrad of Megenberg discussed in the *Book of Nature* the nine choirs of angels in contrast to the eight Aristotelian spheres, without assuming a parallel to human merit and/or social groups.[25]

The examples of Konrad of Megenberg and Berthold of Regensburg show that the development of the motif of the nine choirs of angels was not linear: it showed no clear chronology, and there were only limited distinctions between the Latin and the vernacular traditions. Middle Low German didactical literature uses elements of the subject, all of which were included in earlier texts, but emphasizes specific aspects in which the notion of damnation and a secular social order once again seems to be the central point rather than mystical speculations or deeper insights into the nature of angels.

Besides the inspirations to Late Medieval lay didactical literature drawn from these vernacular traditions, at least one Middle Low German text

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[24] A similar interpretation of the sermon of the ten choirs by Berthold as a mirror of functional tripartition can be found in Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 135–136. He neglects the aspect of quantitative representation, though.

[25] Konrad von Megenberg. *Das "Buch der Natur." Kritischer Text nach den Handschriften*. Ed. by Robert Luff and Georg Steer. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2003. "Von den Engeln," ibid., 79–98.

uses the metaphor of the nine choirs directly quoting from the writings of Nicolaus of Cusa, thereby making it clear that the late medieval texts do not only draw upon and merge older traditions, but also address these traditions in the context of contemporary theological debates.

Nicolaus of Cusa provides a thorough treatment of the Pseudo-Dionysian texts in the book *De coniecturis*, where he affected the transfer of the celestial hierarchy to all levels of existence—heaven, earth, and hell—thereby discerning an overall hierarchy consisting of three times three groups. This is graphically portrayed as the *circulus universorum*,[26] an image that is taken up in the aforementioned Cologne incunabulum *Doernenkrantz van Collen*. Here, the image is used to initiate an interpretation of the order of the realm as deriving from God and mirroring His heavenly hierarchy of angels. It is not only the text, but also a woodcut that illustrates the order of the cosmos. This woodcut closely approximates the one in both manuscripts and printed editions of the Cusanic text *De coniecturis*, Book 1:13, *De ter trinis ter distinctionibus*,[27] although it omits the numbers 10, 100 and 1000, which, in the original, denote the three circles from top to bottom. This omission is crucial, since it marks the step from scholastic, partially cabbalistic, numerological speculation to a metaphorization of a universal order. The Trinity, the spheres of being and the cosmic order are depicted—in a somewhat contracted form—as parallel ordering systems in heaven, on earth and in hell. Each celestial choir is assigned a group of humans, ordered by their spiritual merit, and a group of demons, who have been displaced from different celestial choirs. For humans, the only possible option is ascension, as a descent to hell and its choirs as a result of a sinful life or the ascent to heaven as a result of a virtuous life are not to be found in this Middle Low German version of the nine choirs. The inscription accompanying the image is the same for both the Latin edition of Nicolaus' work and the Middle Low German treatise: *supremie regionis intellectualis, medie regionis racionalis* and *infime regionis grossissima*

[26] An extended description of the importance of Dionysius and Ramon Lull for the development of the *circulus universorum* can be found in Böhlandt, Marco. *Verborgene Zahl—Verborgener Gott: Mathematik und Naturwissen im Denken des Nicolaus Cusanus (1401–1464)*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2009, 145–153. Böhlandt focuses particularly on the numerological speculations in Nicolaus' work. The Trinitarian notion of the *circulus universorum* is described in Schumacher, Thomas. *Trinität: Zur Interpretation eines Strukturelements Cusanischen Denkens*. München: Utz, Verl. Wiss., 1997, 59.

[27] Nicolaus de Cusa. *De coniecturis*. Ed. by Joseph Koch. Hamburg: Meiner, 1972. Description of manuscript and print tradition ibid., IX–XV. Latin print editions were produced in Strasbourg in 1488, in Cortemaggiore in 1502, in Paris in 1514 and in Basel in 1565.

tenebrositatis; the groups of three contained in these are called *primi ordines*, *medii ordines* and *infimi ordines*.[28] The commentary that accompanies the illustration is not consistent with the rest of the text on the preceding and subsequent pages, nor is it a translation of the text around the *circulus universorum* image in *De coniecturis*.[29] It reads:

> Idt is eyn begyn vnde eyn krafftgeuer aller dynge [...] Idt is eyn werck, vnd eyn werckman, eyn keyserdom vnde eyn regente, eyn Furst vnde eyn gemeyn goit, eyn here vnd vader, van dem alle vaderschaff in hemel vnd in erden. Der is eyn in allen dyngen, alle vnd alle, vnde eyn in eyme.
>
> Idt syn drij hemel vnd drij hellen. Der yrste dat is der hoge stait der scheppung. Der ander bouen den stait der scheppung, als der vortganck in doegenden. Der derde der hoghen contemplacie off beschauwelicheyt. Dye eyrste helle is der nederste stait der scheppung. Die ander, gebrechlicheit der vngelichformicheit van der scheppung. Dye derde dye dieffde der verdoemnysse.[30]
>
> [It is a beginning and a support of power for all things ... There is one creation and one creator, one empire and one regent, one lord and one *bonum commune*, one lord and father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth derives. He is one in all things, all and all, and one in one.
>
> There are three heavens and three hells. The first is the high order of creation. The second is above the order of creation, it is the progress in virtue. The third, that of high contemplation or introspection. The first hell is the lowest order of creation. The second, the fragility of the asymmetry of creation. The third, the depth of damnation.]

The connection made between the number one as the number of the monotheistic God, and the number three as the number both of the Trinitarian existence of this God, and as a consequence all orders in the cosmos, recalls a learned justification for functional tripartition: as three is the most important number for cosmological and theological divisions, and as there are three orders on earth, the three orders are consequently part of the divine division of the cosmos. The three orders are divided according to spiritual merit—simple existence, progression in virtue and contemplation. This passage points to the medieval understanding of the tripartite division of heaven, earth and hell as a figurative representation of antitypes, a means of interpreting the Bible and also one's own contemporary time as something in between the old and the

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[28] Doernenkrantz van Collen, fol. 34v.
[29] Nicolaus de Cusa, *De coniecturis*, pars prima, cap. XIII.
[30] Doernenkrantz van Collen, fol. 34v.

new, the eternal and the finite. The dialectical relation between type and antitype determines the position of the human in the middle.[31]

But the rest of the explanation of the *circulus universorum* image in *Doernenkrantz van Collen* does not explicitly work with a tripartite division, nor does it draw upon any aspect of the numerological speculation found in *De coniecturis*. The most plausible explanation for the insertion of the page with the image and the text quoted above is the compilation technique rather than the overall context: the image of the *circulus universorum* fits well with the specific concept of the motif of the angelic choirs in *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, and although the text on the same page did not coincide with the rest of the narrative, it was taken up anyway. It is the only example from the corpus where it was possible to trace an image directly back to a text from the learned theological discourse and it lacks any connection with the rest of the text: the page is inserted between two chapters and the inscription accompanying the woodcut is not connected with the flow of the text. The similarity of the Cusanic image and the one in *Doernenkrantz* is so striking, however, that no other source appears likely.

Doernenkrantz van Collen, however, claims Augustine's *De tribus habitaculis* as the source of the image of the *circulus universorum*. A treatise bearing this title is now usually attributed to St. Patrick. It deals with celestial, demonic and secular hierarchies and uses the nine choirs as a structuring element. Here, the good people become angels, the evil ones, devils, and, generally speaking, hell is an entirely parallel negative reflection of the heavens, while the world is an intermediate step between the two.[32] The overall topic is similar, but *De tribus habitaculis* lacks key components of the motif of the choirs of angels found in the Cologne incunabulum: the names of the angels and the devils, which are provided in the Middle Low German text, the clear assignment of the spheres to human merit and failure and, above all, the assignment of the choirs to social groups. The different functions of the choirs of angels must therefore derive from traditions other than the single source the treatise itself refers to.

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[31] Villwock, Jörg. "Antithese." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik 1.* Ed. by Gert Ueding et al. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1992, 722–750, ibid., 732–735.

[32] This treatise has been ascribed to St. Augustine and to Cesarius of Arles; however, recent scholarship determines St. Patrick to be the author: S. Patricii de tribus habitaculis liber, PL 53, 831A–837B. Modern edition in *The writings of Bishop Patrick, 1074–1084*. Ed. by Aubrey Gwynn. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001 [1955].

The exegesis of the nine choirs of angels in *Doernenkrantz van Collen* positions heaven, earth and hell and its inhabitants in parallel. It specifies the following: Seraphim, the top choir, for the patriarchs, and it is from this one that Lucifer was expelled; Cherubim, prophets; Satan; Throni, "marshals of this world who want justice"; Belial; Domination, martyrs; Behemoth; Principatus, confessor saints; Beelzebub; Potestates, "those who live in chastity"; Belzegor; Virtutes, penitents; Baalberit; Archangels, contemplatives; Leviathan; Little angels, secular people who do works of mercy and Mammon.[33] Of particular originality are the names of the different devils, taken from Scripture, and their assignment to the otherwise well-known names of the angels. The scholastic angelology is complemented with a vernacular demonology.

As a metaphor for society, *Doernenkrantz van Collen* manages to describe three different levels with the choir motif: the celestial choirs metaphorize the righteous, the material choirs, the Holy Roman Empire and the entity of all choirs, the cosmos. The quantitative imbalance between the upper eight choirs of angels and groups of spiritual people, which can only be open to a small number of humans, and the last choir, merciful laypeople, who would make up the quantitatively largest group, is striking. The question remains: what happens to the others? Due to the lack of any connection between the secular orders and the choirs of hell, a descent is not a given for sinners, but at the same time something must become of all of these humans. Purgatory is an option worthy of consideration, but it is not mentioned in connection with the angelic choirs. It is doubtful that this inconsistency was obvious to a medieval public, if the question of what became of all those who were not going to ascend to heaven arose at all or if it was clear from another area of symbolic knowledge that only saints, members of the clerical order and exceptionally virtuous laypeople would be saved. The interpretation of the angelic choirs in this quantitatively imbalanced manner is, as such, entirely in line with the tradition, since in the scholastic debates on the subject the entire laity inhabited only one angelic choir, the lowest.

Still, a justification for the importance of the clerical order in this model is provided, and it sounds almost funny, using a quantitative argument as well: there are said to be many thousands of monks. Monasteries and churches are everywhere. In France alone, there are more than 17,000 parishes—and *wer will dyt kleyne achten so vijl prelaten und geystliche*

[33] Doernenkrantz, fol. 35v–36v.

dyenre der geystlicher ordenunge [who is to despise this, so many prelates and spiritual servants of the spiritual order].[34]

Besides this quantitative argument for the dominance of the clergy in the celestial hierarchy, another statement about the material world is also made: the metaphor of the nine choirs is introduced in the second book of the treatise, which deals with the order of the rulers in general and the order of the realm in particular. As a result, not only is the number of clerics justified, but so is the concept of authority in general: after all, it is not only spiritual merit that appears to lead to a superior place in the celestial hierarchy, but also being a "marshal in the world who wants justice" (*ordeler deser werlt de gerechticheit wolde*), a clear reference to secular rulers and judges, who by the time of Berthold's sermon occupied a crucial place in the highest choirs.

The metaphor of the angelic choirs is no longer used to support an entirely clerical ideology; rather, it supports the existing status quo order in general, a political order relying on the divine order, but populated by all kinds of people. "Everything is all right and the authorities are taking care of things" seems to be the overall message.

Doernenkrantz van Collen is definitely the text in the corpus that uses both the tripartite divisions and the choirs of angels most extensively, but regarding the latter, it is not the only one—the angelic choirs appear often, but never in connection with moral or functional tripartitions. Instead, the focus is on the connection between heavenly and secular choirs, and thereby the potential for salvation of different groups. The didactical dialogue *Speygel der Leyen* clarifies the hierarchy of angels in the thirty-ninth chapter.[35] The editor of the incunabulum does not identify Pseudo-Dionysius as the source for this part, but Gregory the Great, who actually wrote a commentary on the Areopagite. Often in the text it is indicated that the matter is very difficult and thus should be left for a deeper reflection on the part of scholars: in this particular case, the master tells his student, the knowledge would be most profound for those who themselves belong to the angelic choirs. What is certain, however, is the existence of nine choirs. Knowledge about these is said to derive

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[34] Doernenkrantz, fol. 31v.

[35] This is an exemplary case of the correlation of a dialogic situation—which is hierarchic by definition—and the topic of the dialogue, hierarchies. Cf. Betten, Anne. "Analyse literarischer Dialoge." In *Handbuch der Dialoganalyse*. Ed. by Gerd Fritz and Franz Hundsnurscher, 519–544. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994.

primarily from exorcists questioning demons that have possessed people before expelling them.[36]

The ascription of the angelic choirs to social groups in *Speygel der Leyen* is quite unique, since it is centered on confession. *Speygel der Leyen* differs from both the Latin tradition and the rest of the vernacular tradition of the metaphor on a fundamental point: membership in the choirs of angels remains difficult to achieve, but is not entirely beyond the reach of laypeople and, additionally, the merit required to gain entrance to one of the choirs is not connected to Church offices but exclusively to different levels of spiritual merit.

The lowest choir of angels is, according to the *Speygel der Leyen*, populated by unbaptized children and repentant sinners and makes up the *ridder vnde hofghesynde des heren* [knights and servants of the Lord].[37] The second choir is for those "who from the depth of their hearts and with contrition and regret speak with their mouths all their sins according to their best knowledge. As well, they have the strong desire to fulfil the penance that the priest gives them."[38] Note that fulfilling the penance a priest gave to a penitent who confessed was possible for anybody, and thus the second choir is open to anybody.

The third choir, *virtutes*, is for those who commit no new sins after a complete confession—this is almost impossible to achieve since a complete confession was a feature of sanctity as, for example, in the case of fourteenth-century St. Dorothy of Montau, who required several visions and the will to be walled into a cell in order to be able to look deeply enough into her heart to make a complete confession, which was considered one of her foremost spiritual gifts.

The fourth choir, *potestates*, combines all the merits of the former orders, but requires, in addition to a perfect confession, a life of asceticism—whether this is supposed to mean the entrance into a monastic order is not clarified, and since the rest of the book is rather cautious about pro-monastic advice, this seems doubtful. The fifth choir, *principatus*, is inhabited by the martyrs, and the sixth, *Dominationes*, by those who are powerful on earth, so powerful that they are able to dominate themselves. This is obviously not meant as a description of secular rulers,

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[36] Speygel der Leyen, fol. 53v–59r.

[37] Ibid., fol. 54r.

[38] "De vth grunde eres herten myt wemode vnde myt droffenisse ytspreken mit deme munde alle ere sunde myt aller vmmestandicheyt. Vnde se hebben vaste vpsate de bote vullentobringen, de en de prester settet." Ibid.

but as yet another level of spiritual and ascetic perfection, paraphrased as "the little saints."[39]

For the seventh choir, *Throni*, the main qualification is the virtue of patience that allows one to accept all events and situations with equanimity. The eighth choir is again home to a type of saint, namely those who already in their lifetime do not think, speak about or taste anything but God. Compared to this stipulation, the requirement for entering the ninth choir sounds almost modest: all that is required is the complete observance of the Golden Rule, and this coincides with the overall message of the text—spiritual achievements that look easy can still be very difficult and can still result in great rewards.

It is obvious that the hierarchy of the angelic choirs in *Speygel der Leyen* is not intended to legitimize the Church hierarchy, but to explain simple truths of faith and to act as additional evidence of the need to strive for spiritual merit, regardless of one's social position. The metaphorical level of the names and functions of the angels—knights, dukes, lords, and rulers—is, on the other hand, made explicit in the terminology of rulership:

> Wat groter hylghe desse syn, wat eddele rydders, wat mechtiger vorsten, wat groter heren, wat weldyghe ghebedygers. Desse groten hylghen synt vnse broders, wente myt en dencke wy ewych to leuen.[40]
>
> [What great saints these are, what noble knights, what mighty princes, what great lords, what powerful intercessors. These great saints are our brothers, and with these we might live forever.]

Again, in the metaphor for society used in *Speygel der Leyen*, the source terms are stable (nine choirs) but the target terms are not since they do not include assignments to ecclesiastical hierarchies but generally keep all the choirs open to laypeople, whose eschatological significance is thereby increased. The change from a distinct clerical ideology to a potentially lay ideology occurs when any connection to specific social groups is entirely absent. Only the positive notion of the concept of authority and rule is still to be found in the source terms, but who is ruling and who is to be ruled remains unspecified. It is of interest that precisely this passage about the nine choirs in *Speygel der Leyen* is taken word for word from a plenary printed by the Poppy Printer in Lübeck.[41] The popularization of the

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[39] "In dessem kore see wy, isset dat wy dar komen, wo vaste, wo werdich [...] dat dar is de loen der kleynen hylghen." Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Printed in Kämpfer, *Studien*, 170; 181.

motif must have made great advances for the same vision of a heaven that potentially had space for all social groups to be used by priests in their lectionaries and laypeople in their books at the same time. Heaven and hell and the human sphere in between are used not in order to enlarge the clergy's sphere of power, but to encourage all Christians to follow the rules of virtuousness.

Several other Middle Low German incunabula use the nine choirs of angels as a metaphor for society, one of them rather en passant: in the legend *Arnt Buschmanns mirakel*, the peasant Arnt is repeatedly visited by a ghost who advises him to pay for several masses to be sung, one of them in favor of the nine choirs of angels.[42] Whether any assignment to a secular order occurs here cannot be discerned, but the episodes bear evidence of the metaphor—or at least the motif of the choirs—being widespread and popular. In the same way, prayer books for the Virgin Mary (Rosaries and *Horae*) often include a section where the choirs of angels are mentioned specifically in the description of the angels and saints who surround the Virgin Mary in heaven.[43] Here at least the names of either the choirs or the clerical groups that belong to them are mentioned, and

The angelic and demonic choirs and the social groups connected to them

Doernenkrantz van Collen			Speygel der Leyen / Plenarium
Seraphim	patriarchs	Lucifer	followers of the Golden Rule
Cherubim	prophets	Satan	those who had nothing but God in mind during their lifetime
Throni	rulers	Belial	truly patient people
Dominationes	martyrs	Behemoth	small saints
Principatus	confessor saints	Beelzebub	martyrs
Potestates	the chaste	Belzegor	those who lead an ascetic life after a complete confession
Virtutes	penitents	Baalberit	those who commit no more sins after a complete confession
Archangeli	contemplatives	Leviathan	truly contrite sinners
Kleyne engele	merciful laypeople	Mammon	unbaptized children, contrite sinners

[42] Cit. after Seelmann, "Buschmans Mirakel," 32–67.

[43] "Ghebenedyet syn gy kore alle negen. Benedyet synt gy in deme ersten kore gy hylghen engele angeli. Dar to in deme anderen kore gy hylghen engele archangeli. Benedyet sint gy in deme dreden kore gy hylghen engele virtutes. [...]" Bedeboek: Seven tyden (Horae), Paris 1500, fol. 115r.

the concept of a hierarchy in the heavens is included, although the entire metaphor is not laid out. The order of virtue and the potential openness of the choirs to laypeople are replaced by angelic choirs as a faithful image of the ecclesiastical hierarchy from bishop to simple monk as well as by different kinds of saints such as martyrs or holy virgins.[44] This is evidence of the popularity of a metaphor that could be used in different contexts, with the part about the heavenly hierarchy always being relatively fixed, while the part addressing the secular parallel was open to interpretation and, thereby, to different ideological content.

Nevertheless, prayers were used to address didactical and parenetical issues as well, and prayers in the vernacular particularly served an important function in the internalization of faith and contrition.[45] This is probably why a relatively complete description of the nine choirs of angels is included in the Magdeburg compilation *Spegel der sammiticheit*, which consists of catechetical sections and prayers. One of its extant prayer chapters deals with St. Michael and all of the holy angels, and it arranges the names of the nine choirs of angels according to the tradition, divided in three *forstendome* with three *kore* each. The main focus of the description is the function of the angels within the heavenly hierarchy, their access to mystical secrets and their way of communicating with humans, all of this according to the Latin scholastic tradition, without either an obvious parallel to a secular sphere or the option for humans to ascend into any of the choirs being included.[46] The exegesis of the names of the angels Gabriel, Raphael, Michael and Uriel is connected to a prayer addressing their specific functions and virtues such as righteousness, strength and humbleness. The only explicit mention of a connection to the secular order points to an issue already fully developed in *Doernenkrantz van Collen*: that all authority derives from God and is to be honored just as He is.

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[44] "Nu horet und vornemet gar/so kummet god myt syner schar/de engel apostel vnde merteler/ock ewangelisten vnde prediker/bisschoppe prester vnde monnicke schar/sueth men komen openbar/de patriarchen vnde profeten/dusse schaer se beleyden/maria de konninginne tzart/deisz vor an der vart/myt aller iunckfrouwen schare/so trid de moder godes vore/weddewen vnde der nunnen schar/de syn alle vorsammelt gar." Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen, fol. 5r.

[45] Lentes, Thomas. "Andacht und Gebärde: Das religiöse Ausdrucksverhalten." In *Kulturelle Reformation: Sinnformationen im Umbruch 1400–1600*. Ed. by Bernhard Jussen and Craig Koslofsky, 29–67. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, ibid. 39.

[46] Spegel der sammiticheit, fol. 298r–300v.

> Principatus gy vorstlike macht, gheuet my hoiersamheyt vnde ere to beden alle mynen ouersten, wente ze vorstaen hir an my de stede godes.[47]
>
> [*Principatus*, you noble power, help me behave obediently and humbly towards all my superiors, since they preside in God's name.]

The omission of an explicit possibility for humans to ascend to one of the nine choirs along with the installation of authority as the only point of contact between the two spheres points to a traditional, conservative and clerical ideology. The nine choirs of angels are used as a metaphor for the secular hierarchy, even if this part of the metaphor is not made explicit. This means that the concept of the source terms is very distinct and very stable, while the target terms can only be determined by an intuitive and contextual decoding.

Finally, there is the incunabulum *Bewährung, dass die Juden irren*, which also uses the metaphor of the nine choirs of angels, but with a different purpose. The text consists of Book I of the *Seelenwurzgarten*, written in German around 1460/70 in the monastery Komburg near Schwäbisch Hall and structured as a collection of exempla in four books.[48] Six complete incunabula editions are preserved in High German, as are three others consisting only of Book I, one of which is written in Middle Low German.[49]

Bewährung, dass die Juden irren tries to repudiate the Jewish faith by quoting pagan and Hebrew texts that are said to have prophesied the coming of Christ as the Messiah, in the form of a fictional dialogue where rabbinical texts are presented as the answers of "a Jew" providing arguments proving Christ was not the Messiah. The Christian dialogue partner is not introduced or labeled as "the Christian"; rather, the counterarguments are simply presented, and they win the argument in most cases. The text relies on the typological opposition between the Old Testament and the New Testament, with the former serving as a *praefiguratio* of the coming of Christ. As a result, the text tries to persuade "the Jew" of the immanence of Christ as the Messiah in the Old Testament.[50]

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[47] Ibid., fol. 300v.

[48] The manuscript tradition is described in Steer, Georg. "Zur Entstehung und Herkunft der Donaueschinger Handschrift 120 ('Donaueschinger Liederhandschrift')." In *Untersuchungen zur Literatur und Sprache des Mittelalters: Kurt Ruh zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ed. by Peter Kesting, 193–210. München: Fink, 1975.

[49] Seelenwurzgarten. Bewährung, dass die Juden irren. Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca. 1474. BC 3, GW M41179.

[50] On the persuasive function of typological exegesis in the Early Church, see Michel, "Übergangsformen."

The choirs of angels form the introduction of this treatise. The metaphor derives from a paraphrase of Genesis where, after the creation of light, God creates the angels, not as equals, but as a hierarchy. The names of the choirs follow, reduced to their respective functions in the praise of God or in the human sphere. (This contains an inaccuracy: Gn 1 is identified as the source for the hierarchy of angels, when the latter in fact was assembled from many different biblical books.) The by now well-known aspect of the deeper knowledge of the angels about heavenly matters is mentioned. The creation of the angels as subjects with a free will leads to Lucifer's sin of wanting to be like God, for which he was expelled along with his fellows—Is 3 is cited as the source for this, again inaccurately, as the usual point of reference for the fall is an exegesis of the fall of the morning star in Is 14. The text assumes that in each of the nine choirs of angels there were some who fell with Lucifer.[51]

The nine choirs of angels are mentioned to provide an introduction to the real issue: the devils and demons and how they affect the earth and cause people to do evil. An example by Caesarius of Heisterbach illustrates this, as does the story of Adam's fall, the covenant, the genealogy of the sons of Abraham and a par force trip through the Old Testament leading up to Jesus' birth. The choirs of angels play no further role: they are nothing more than the origin of creation and the development of mankind's fall and damnation, which does not end until the arrival of the Savior, the Christian Messiah.

This brief reference to the angelic choirs in the introduction of an anti-Jewish treatise makes use of the heavenly hierarchy and its connotations, a parallel of the celestial and the infernal hierarchy, and the dependence of the humans on both of them. The originally mystical contemplation of the celestial joys and the Trinity has become a symbol for the threat of damnation as its counterpart, the infernal hierarchy omnipresent in the world. The strong emphasis on the relation of human merit to the angelic choirs is omitted here.

In the preamble to the treaty itself, the connection between the demons and the Jews is not made explicit. Nevertheless, the context clarifies it: it is the different dimensions of evil in the world that the demons make available, but people choose them themselves. These options include various heresies and deviations from the Catholic faith and Judaism as the major heresy:[52]

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[51] Bewährung, fol. 1r–1v.

[52] On the first examples of the connection between Judaism and heresy in Catholic propaganda during the Hussite wars see Timmermann, Achim. "The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross." *Gesta* 40, no. 2 (2001): 152.

> Van den ungelouigen. Dat ouerst to deser tyd vele mynsche in der werld synd de an vnsen heren ihesum cristum nicht gelouen, alse alle yoden heyden vnd torken vnd der vele mer. Vnd doch eyn iewelik menet he geloue recht, dat schal nenen cristen wunderen noch syk dar af ergeren, men he scal gode den almechtigen des do vlitiger danken [. . .][53]
>
> [About the unfaithful. That especially in our times there are many humans in our world who do not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, such as all the Jews, pagans, Turks and many more. And still each of those believes his belief to be right, this is nothing a Christian should wonder about nor be irritated by, but he should be even more thankful to the Lord.]

In this context, two aspects of the angelic hierarchy are crucial to its discursive reuse as a metaphor for the social order: that the choirs of angels are the origins of the different devils and demons, which form a parallel infernal hierarchy—something that Thomas Aquinas denied and Berthold von Regensburg fully clarified and that was debated as a theory by St. Patrick and Nicolaus of Cusa—and the entanglement of the people in both hierarchies, as specified by Berthold. Cosmology, Trinity and mysticism are no longer relevant: it is a secular interpretation of angelology. The various angels help, the various devils tempt, and people are torn between the two. The typological design of parallel spheres finds its counterpart in the typological design of Jews and Christians, old and new, and thereby the dialectical annihilation of the old.[54] *Bewährung, dass die Juden irren* uses the metaphor of the nine choirs of angels as an introduction to the wickedness of the Jews, pagans and heretics, and thereby again demonstrates the metaphor's availability as a metaphor for a social order that can no longer be described in fixed categories for the internal order but still has clear boundaries.

In summary, the motif of the nine choirs of angels proves to be a popular metaphor for society in late medieval didactical literature. Only one specific aspect of the entire motif—the nine angelic choirs and their names—seems to be fixed, while all the other fragments are flexible and can be formulated according to the specific purpose of the text. These purposes range from advancing a traditional clerical ideology and legitimizing clerical privileges in *Doernenkrantz van Collen* through a hierarchy open to laypeople and based solely on spiritual merit in *Speygel der Leyen* to the focus on demons and a connection with anti-Jewish ideology in

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[53] Bewährung, fol. 6r.

[54] Ohly, "Synagoge und Ecclesia," addresses the principle of typological analogies inside and outside biblical metaphors.

Bewährung, dass die Juden irren. In contrast to those scholars who have pointed out the nine choirs of angels as a metaphor connected to functional tripartition, the comparative analysis of the different evidence from the incunabula shows that functionality is the most significant feature only with regard to the division of the angels, not regarding the humans. Rather, the flexibility and wide range of the potential modes of dividing people into hierarchies that the metaphor offers seems to be one of the reasons for its popularity. It is not ideological or logical consistency that is important, but a compilation of imagery and ideological fragments that resembles the techniques used in text production—compilation, abridgement, and translation.

Differences in the metaphor's target area are distinguishable in connection with the different discourses the texts belong to. *Doernenkrantz van Collen* explicitly uses fragments of a learned discourse by Nicolaus of Cusa with reference to the angelic choirs, one in which only the lowest choir is open to laypeople. In rosaries and prayer books, the connection between the highest angelic choirs and the ecclesiastical hierarchies is even more explicit and the inhabitants of the highest choirs are identified as bishops, priests and saints, while in the Middle Low German original *Speygel der Leyen*, a hierarchy of virtue is the only relevant ordering principle. None of the Middle Low German texts take up the very concrete assignment of different professions and crafts to certain choirs, as is seen in the sermons of Berthold von Regensburg. Instead of functionality, virtue is the relevant ordering principle, but the connection of the clergy to superior spiritual merit and virtue is only preserved in the traditional discourse. This corresponds to the overall tendency of the two discourses either to support the existing privileges of the clergy or to support a redefinition of the boundaries between clergy and laity. This redefinition becomes even more evident in the most prominent and popular way of dividing people in the entire corpus: binomials.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE MIGHTY: THE DIVISION OF SOCIETY INTO OPPOSITIONS

V.1 *Binomials as Social Imagery*

One of the striking features of moral tripartition is that it encompasses only the righteous among the Christians, with an internal hierarchy among them—in the parable of the sower, all others are subsumed under the rubric of the seed that fails to bear fruit. In the sources from the fifteenth century, the need to differentiate among the righteous seems to be of less importance—instead, the demarcation between those who are saved and those who are not is the focus of the lay didactical literature. This might partly be due to the parenetic aim of the texts, but it also represents a view of the world and society from a different angle altogether: the privileges of the clergy have long been established and, despite the occasional critical position against members of the clergy, their general position and authority do not have to be defended. However another, earlier unquestioned connection no longer holds: the presumption that the clergy is the group that represents and attains the highest moral status. In lay didactical literature, there are different attempts to distinguish among people, and many of them include the connection of the clergy with authority and privilege, but not with moral superiority. The different forms of authority, on the one hand, and moral superiority, on the other hand, are expressed in a very basic rhetorical form: oppositions.

Although quite meaningless in tripartite models, the relationship between lord and servant becomes a model for several other binomial pairs: "confessor and penitent", "man and woman", "clergy and laity". While functionality was the glue that held the three orders of society together in their mutual rights and duties, binomials work differently: they are connected through a dialectical relationship of opposition, and they receive meaning, particularly regarding the hierarchy of the two poles, through the interconnection of several oppositions that are combined and categorized together in a way that suggests which pole is the superior and which is the inferior.

This phenomenon is difficult to fit into a system of rhetorical figures since it is so normalized that its semantic value as figurative expression

has disappeared entirely. Opposites such as "clerics-laypeople", "man-woman", "rich-poor", "young-old", "sinner-righteous", and "confessor-penitent" serve as structuring elements in most of the texts—any one of them or a combination of them. The attractiveness of oppositions lies in their evocativeness, their ability to look like natural and given distinctions. The definition of the oppositions as a trope for society, a rhetorical figure instead of a description, should debunk this inherency and make it possible to question the arising demarcations based on their logic, their traditions and their implications for social hierarchies. These oppositions are very profound and stable formulations, which present themselves as objective truths and thereby conceal the cultural connotations of the hierarchical assignment to a specific group as well as to the principle underlying the boundary between the poles. It is thus necessary to investigate the linguistic and semantic implications of different types of oppositions before assessing those contained in lay didactical literature.

Rhetorical theory of the Middle Ages sees antitheses as a major trope deriving from analogical biblical exegesis.[1] From this perspective, a concept of antitheses arises that sees the poles as connected through a relation of analogy and, as a result, of the fact that each pole is conceptually antithetical to the other. Beda Venerabilis connected the antithesis with the metaphor, which in a dialectical process both sharpens and harmonizes the oppositions. An example is the Christian concept of death as both opposite to life and as the metaphorical way of life, which is rooted in the most basic antithesis of all, the one between finite life on earth and eternal life in heaven.[2] This medieval notion of antithesis also raises the question of the significance of constructions of the "other" in religious literature: even though Christianity always needs an "other" as part of its self-definition and self-identification, it is not necessary that the identification of the "other" leads to a value judgment about the difference.[3]

The two types of opposites that are relevant in the context of this study are complementaries and antonyms, and already the demarcation between these is crucial for an analysis of social imagery. A complementary divides the total of a conceptual area into two compartments. The denial of one

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[1] See for example Ohly, "Synagoge und Ecclesia," passim.

[2] Villwock, "Antithese," 732–735.

[3] Hillerbrand, Hans J. "The 'Other' in the Age of the Reformation." In *Infinite boundaries: Order, disorder, and reorder in early modern German culture*. Ed. by Max Reinhart, 245–269. Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publ., 1998, ibid., 248.

of the terms is tantamount to the assertion of the other: for example, "it is not dead" leads to the conclusion that "it is alive." Examples of complementaries from the field of metaphors for society are "man-woman", "clerics-laypeople", and occasionally even "free-unfree".

The other type of opposites is antonyms (here in a more narrow meaning than just opposites of any type). They also theoretically constitute a common conceptual area, but the denial of one term is not tantamount to asserting the other: for example, "it is not small" does not necessarily mean "it is large." Antonyms denote degrees of a variable property that are greater or less than some reference value, and they will be recognized as referential to the context. Examples from the medieval corpus are "rich-poor", "old-young" and sometimes "good-bad".[4]

A specific form of oppositions is the binomial (*Zwillingsformel*, also pair formula or hendyadyoin), a rhetorical figure popular in many European languages and frequently analyzed in linguistics and poetology.[5] A binomial is a pair of nouns, verbs or adjectives that belongs to the same category of meaning but can be synonymous, nearly synonymous or antagonistic. They are used for emphasis and reinforcement and, as a root for this magic function, oath formulas from Germanic legal texts have been identified which often use binomials for an enforcement of self-anathema or other curses.[6] They also occur frequently in the *Burspraken*, Hanseatic urban law texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as previously shown.

Characteristic of many binomials is that the meaning of the expression in sum is different from the meaning of the single expressions that make up the pair. The composition of the binomial is very stable, but its meaning is idiomatic and thus open for semantic shifts.[7] The composition falls into different categories; either a climax in meaning (*Acht und Bann, Lug und Trug*) or formal factors, such as end rhyme or stave rhyme. Binomials that have an antonymic meaning (*arm und reich, alt und jung*)

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[4] This entire description of complementaries follows Cruse, D. A. "Language, Meaning and Sense." In *An encyclopaedia of language*. Ed. by Neville E. Collinge, 76–93. London: Routledge, 2001. Cruse makes out markedness as the second distinct feature of opposites, but this is of less concern in this context.

[5] Benor, Sarah, and Roger Levy. "The Chicken or the Egg? A Probabilistic Analysis of English Binomials," *Language* 82, no. 2 (2006); Jeep, John M. *Alliterating word-pairs in early middle high German.* Baltmannsweiler: Schneider, 2006.

[6] Dilcher, Gerhard. *Paarformeln in der Rechtssprache des frühen Mittelalters*. Darmstadt, Frankfurt am Main: Frotscher, 1961, 35–39.

[7] Müller, Hans-Georg. *Adleraug und Luchsenohr: Deutsche Zwillingsformeln und ihr Gebrauch.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2009, 11–12.

are one specific type of semantic relation and, since they are so similar to "normal" oppositions, the question of whether they generate a meaning different from the sum of the parts must be investigated on a case-by-case basis. The surplus of meaning is a distinct feature of the binomial, but not every binary pair of nouns is a binomial. Twin formulas are also popular in religious texts even though it is not always clear what the surplus of meaning is; for example, in the fixed formula *keusch und rein*, which is a tautology frequently used in German medieval sermons.[8]

Oppositions focus on the dialectical relationship between the two poles. The opposition between "rich" and "poor" in late medieval urban legal texts provides an example.[9] This particular opposition does not so much express a clear boundary between people with different economic resources as a dialectical relationship between two elements that together constitute the town as a political entity. In lay didactical literature, this binomial is often mentioned in the context of charity and the need for humbleness, establishing that both groups are only meaningful in the context of their mutual relationship and are essential for each other's salvation, given that the status-specific virtues of charity and humbleness required of each are inherent in their relationship.

Regarding the classification of metaphors for society, the problem starts even earlier, namely with the classification of binary oppositions as complementaries or antonyms, since these are already highly culturally denoted and differ fundamentally from each other regarding the relation between the two poles: complementaries comprise two units which entirely exclude each other, where the denial of one term is synonymous with the other. Antonyms are, on the other hand, conceptualized with a gradual transition between the two poles.[10] The opposition "man-woman" would be a complementary in western culture, since no other gender concepts are socially accepted. Likewise, the opposition "cleric-layman" would at first sight be perceived as a complementary, but the boundaries here are blurry—what about nuns, semi-religious people and Jews? In other societies, more options are conceivable, and thus the opposition can be classified as a complementary only from a certain point of view, the point of view of someone who accepts the division of people into either clerics or laypeople as unquestionable, a point of view that the clerics themselves

8 Schumacher, *Sündenschmutz*, 128.
9 Frenz, *Gleichheitsdenken*, 15.
10 Cf. Cruse, "Language."

would probably share. In this case, the question of whether an opposition counts as a complementary or as an antonym contains information not only about the positive notion of one of the terms, but also about the ideological framework that presents the opposition as a complementary. To derive from the statement "he is not a cleric" the question "what is he, then?" rather than the statement "he is a layman" is not a linguistic but a cultural or even ideological outcome, one that reveals how many alternatives to a given social order can be imagined.

In the cognitive theory of metaphors, most of them are said to be based on a physical experience and are assigned a connotation deriving from the human body based on the top and the bottom, thereby providing the basis for the other, more abstract dichotomies: "higher and lower", for example, can be assigned to the head and the feet, which on the basis of human consciousness corresponds to the feeling that something is closer than something else. Thus, the cultural connotation of "high" as better than "low" derives from the physical experience of feeling closer to one's head than to one's feet.[11] The hierarchical implementation of oppositions for describing society is less clearly assigned: whether "old" is better than "young", for example, depends upon cultural and historical specificities that lie outside the oppositions themselves and can vary from society to society. The challenge lies in the fact that the oppositions themselves are stable, but their connotations are not—at least not necessarily: while contemporary scholars, on the basis of their experience of post-modern western societies, spontaneously would say "young is better," this is not necessarily true for medieval societies. On the other hand, to assume that pre-modern societies would naturally tend to the judgment "old is better," based on a more positive estimation of the experience, is presumptuous and must be verified on the basis of the textual context. A third possibility can also be imagined: that there are oppositions that are not connected to any hierarchy, i.e. that "old" and "young" represent different poles that are horizontally rather than vertically ordered on a scale of repudiation versus merit.

The textual traditions, however, point to the oppositions having an ordering function rather than one that is descriptive. Canon law and the Church Fathers used oppositions, such as "clergy" and "laity" or "man" and "woman", in order to establish the hierarchy between the poles. Thomas Aquinas used complex combinations of oppositions in his conception of

[11] Lakoff/Johnson, *Metaphors*, 17–19.

the orders of society, with each group in itself being hierarchically organized, and the inferior pole of a given hierarchy obliged to obey the superior pole.[12] The principle of obedience and subordination thus defines the order. The biblical basis for this is to be found in the Paulinian admonitions to the orders, especially Col 3:18 (*Haustafel*), where dichotomized pairs are arranged in their mutual duties. It is striking here that most people would belong to more than one group, as is the case for "father" and "child", and "servant" and "head of the household".[13]

Even though the idea of equality in its specific late medieval urban form is prominent in normative sources and the twin formula "rich and poor" is part of the semantic foundation for this meaning, this formula does not play a significant role in the lay didactical literature, at least not as a rhetorical figure prominently structuring a text. The poor occasionally act as a contrast to the general matrix of urban upper class strata that the texts deal with. Rich and poor are often mentioned in the context of charity and the need for humbleness:

> Rike lude den god dat gud gyfft de scullen dat ewyge leuent van den armen kopen myt den almissen, und de armen mothen dat ewige leuent kopen mit ghedult de se scullen hebben to den almissen to entfangende van den riken, unde also wil god dorch des besten willen de riken lude hebben umme der armen willen, unde de armen dorch der riken willen ôn beyden to nutte unde to salicheyt.[14]
>
> [Rich people, who receive their goods from God, should buy eternal life from the poor people with alms, and the poor have to buy eternal life with the patience which they require to receive the alms from the rich. Thus God wants to have the rich people for the sake of the poor people, (and vice versa) for both of their benefit and salvation.]

This quotation includes a meaning of the "rich and poor" binomial that differs from its use in normative sources: "the rich and the poor" is not a description of the social entities in a political sense, but in an eschatological sense. However, as is the case with normative sources, the meaning of equality between the two poles is evident—in the sense of "equally important for the entity"—since both the rich and the poor are necessary

[12] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 84.

[13] Hubler calls this the *Haustafelschema*, based on the later use of the biblical text along with other similar ones in the Lutheran *Haustafel*, a collection of quotations from Pauline letters that were used as a canonized appendix to the catechism. Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 49–50.

[14] *Summa to dude*, Letter R, chapter 14.

for God's plan for humanity. Much more than is the case when the binomial is used in normative sources, the aspect of mutuality is made explicit in the eschatological context: the two poles of the opposition are situated far apart on a scale of social ordering, but still they are connected through mutual duties and need each other in order to develop and enhance their order-specific virtues. In keeping with the legitimizing function of the binomial in the normative sources, the opposition as explained in a religious context includes a legitimization of the social order and its implicit hierarchies. In this case, the assignment of a hierarchy to the poles is simple: "rich" is better than "poor". However, at the same time the eschatological framing diminishes this hierarchy: the rich are nothing without the poor. "The poor" also serves as the explicit other for the implicit reading public, especially in the case of catechetical advice, where failing to assume one's duty to feed, house and generally help the poor is included in many of the lists of things to confess.[15] Here the difference between "the poor" in general and "rich and poor" in the binomial pair becomes apparent: the aspects of equality and mutuality disappear when only one of the groups is mentioned in relation to certain duties. The dialectical relationship functions on both a cognitive and a concrete social level: "rich" exists only in relation to "poor", and rulers would not exist without their subjects.

The inherent hierarchy between the two poles is a distinct element of this binomial, as is the concomitant social model; a vertically ordered entity clearly divided in two sections. "Man and woman", "rich and poor", "master and servant"—for all of these the hierarchy is clear. But there is one exception: the opposition between "the righteous" and "the doomed" or simply "the good" and "the evil", which is not automatically connected to the superior sections of the social hierarchies—the master is not automatically good and the poor not automatically evil. This is a break with the traditional ordering systems, which assign the nobility and the clergy superior moral status, thereby justifying their privileges. It also differs from modern ordering systems, which tend to connect morality to a way of life and behavior and thereby discursively place excesses, gluttony and

[15] For example: "Hefstu vnrecht gewalt gedan armen luden, edder hefstu den eynen mynschen beter ghehort wen deme anderen." Licht der Seelen, fol. 11v. "Heffstu nicht gespiset de armen na dynem vormoge." Ibid., fol. 13v.

dirt among the masses, while moral qualities that are assigned a superior status are placed within the elite.[16]

While the importance of binomials as a linguistic phenomenon is widely acknowledged,[17] their importance for entire texts and cognitive correlations has not been much discussed. One reason is that those studies that have tried to derive explanations for the occurrence of binomials from a quantitative analysis of this occurrence in texts in the vernacular have had discouraging results. "It seems that attempts in that direction, which strive to grasp the phenomenon as a whole, are speculative and/or overly generalizing at best," as John M. Jeep puts it.[18]

This means that instead of focusing on the general rules of usage of binomials in large text corpora, their specific use and function in certain literary genres and contexts must be studied in order to arrive at partial solutions. The following chapter aims to analyze the specific usage in Middle Low German didactical texts by first assembling evidence of binomials, with a focus on the reasoning and principles underlying the distinctions within these oppositions. Then the question of the target area will be addressed: which entity or entities do they describe—Christian society, the righteous, or all humans?

For a concrete analysis of certain common oppositions, the question of their character is important: are the oppositions conceived of as complementary, clearly demarcated or mutually exclusive, or as relative oppositions (antonyms), with the line between the two poles being blurry? After this inventory and classification of oppositions, more general conclusions can be drawn about the society these oppositions operate in and its internal hierarchical ordering. The connection between different oppositions and their mutual legitimization, as well as the reciprocal reinforcement of their hierarchical implementation, will become particularly clear. An especially sensitive issue is the connection of each opposition to the opposition between "good" and "evil", which is an underlying matrix for most of the lay didactical texts: is belonging to one or the other pole in an opposition automatically connected to vice or virtue? Furthermore,

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[16] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London, New York: Routledge, 2010 [1979], 472. He actually sees the binary organization of class-divided societies in connection to the medieval tripartite divisions as not very likely.

[17] A survey of linguistic theories on binomials can be found in Benor/Levy. "The Chicken or the Egg," 233–235.

[18] Jeep, *Alliterating Word-Pairs*, 55.

within the rhetorical forms of opposition, the order of virtue exists parallel to the social order.

V.2 *The Good and the Evil*

Naturally and entirely in keeping with the general goal of lay didactical literature, most of the texts include an implicit or explicit boundary between those who will be saved and those who will not. All catechetical texts establish boundaries between socially and religiously acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Additionally, all texts dealing with the Last Judgment and heaven and hell deal with an explicit distinction between "the good" and "the evil". In this context, the opposition between good and evil lies more in the extensive descriptions of sins as signs of evil than in virtue as signs of good, with "good" as the implicit norm and "evil" formulated as a deviation from good. Instead of exceptional virtue, only the basic requirements for being a good Christian are identified—for example, hearing an entire mass every Sunday, confessing at least once a year and receiving the sacrament. Whoever fails to follow these rules will not only be classed among the evil at the Last Judgment, but will also be "banned from coming to Church, and after his death, he will be buried in an unsanctified place."[19] The distinction of "good" from "evil" is not only something that is between the individual and God; it is also society's responsibility to envision the condemnation, which will be detectable during a person's lifetime. A person's moral status is a public affair, and this makes the connection between moral and social status especially sensitive.

Robert Bast has described the way the reasoning found in Protestant Decalogue explanations establishes types and antitypes for specific social roles[20]—in the present medieval sources, however, "types" do not receive much attention. Positive Christian virtues are implied or described by their opposites, rather than being clearly expressed. If a good wife, for example, is a type with certain responsibilities and qualities, and the

[19] "Dat XII ca van v baden der hilghen kerken de alle cristen minschen schuldich sint to holdende. Alle sondaghe schaltu hôren eyne heele missen myt groter andacht vnde alze me dat ewangelium lest edder singet schaltu recht vpstan mit werdicheit. Du schalt ok to dem minsten alle yaer eyns bichten vnde dat hylghe sacrament entfangen, id were denne dat du dat levest mit rade dines bichtuaders. So wi des nicht don, scôle wy bedwungen werden in de kerke nicht tokamen, vnde na sinem dode vp nene ghewyede stede begrauen werden." Kerstenspiegel, Rostock 1507, fol. 22r–22v.

[20] Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 91.

antitype is a wife who lacks all or some of these qualities, then the inside and the outside of Christian society are clearly defined by moral factors, with the positive and negative factors that determine who belongs to each being clarified. In medieval sources, the distinction between good and evil seems to be more absolute and less clearly connected to social roles—anyone can potentially be damned. One possible way of detecting sinners is by distinguishing between the good people, who despise the world and its pleasures, and the evil people, who live joyful lives on earth. Here, the potential of the Gospel regarding an inversion of the social order and status quo is acknowledged and appraised, but projected onto the afterlife.

Naturally, the description of the bad seeds and the joy of those who will be among the doomed fills many more pages than the description of the good; for example, in *Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde*, which promises a description of what "divides the good people and the evil people from each other." The evil people (*bősen mynschen*) are notable for their feasting, their happiness and their sociability. As for the good people—they are not described at all.[21]

The context of the Last Judgment—which is very tangible in a variety of didactical texts, but not overly present in explanations of the Decalogue—frames a formulation of good and evil that is intertwined with the question of social orders in an extremely complicated way: all didactical texts include a certain perception of personality characteristics, actions or vices that will definitely prevent a person's salvation. Mortal sins, quiet sins, simony and usury are examples. Often those who commit these sins constitute a fixed social group, with the result that designated social groups are identified as sinners. It is here that the difference between the good-evil opposition and all other oppositions becomes apparent, since all other oppositions include a socially or economically determined hierarchy, while the good-evil opposition consciously breaks with social hierarchies. An example can be found in the rhymed devotional and catechetical text *Claghe und droffenisse der vordomeden selen*, which talks about the joys of heaven and the horrors awaiting the doomed.

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[21] "Gy scholen merken, dat twisschen den guden unde bősen yß sodane underscheet. Wente de bősen leefhebber desser werlde, de maken alle tyt őre vroude vnde feste vor der vilge edder vor deme auende. Dat ys also to vorstaen de bősen mynschen vrouwen sick in desser werlde in allen tytlyken wollustyghen dyngen vnde wol geuallen őres sundlyken herten, […]" Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde, fol. 6v–7r.

De duuel wert sy beleyden
unde nemen se mit grotem schalle
unde voren se in de helle alle
se bryngen legaten vnde cardinale
dar to pewese bisschoppe ane tale
up ytlyke ick noch seggen schal
de ock horen to dussem vall
de dar hebben ein unrecht leuen.[22]

[The devils will follow them / and take them with great noise / and lead them all to hell / they bring legates and cardinals / together with popes, innumerable bishops / of many other I will speak / who also will be part of this fall / who have an unrighteous life.]

Legates, cardinals and bishops are specifically mentioned among those who are led to hell by the devils and punished for their deeds, not as the only ones, but clearly among the evil. This is not really a markedly anti-clerical issue, but rather one of several examples of the mighty being mentioned as significant groups among the sinners. Ecclesiastical authorities, as much as secular rulers, had a prominent place among those in the clutches of sin.

Heren fursten vnde rychtere
den wert gerychtet also sware
de wokerer unde eebreker
morder und junckfrowen sweker
werden in der helle to hope syn
myt den deuen lyden se grote pyn
spelern unde drenckeren wert we
wente se scholen schryen iummer mee
de duuel wert se drencken
sweuel und pek wert he on schencken.[23]

[Lords, dukes and judges / they will be judged severely / usurers and adulterers / murderers and violators of virgins / will be together in hell / with the thieves they are suffering great pain / gamblers and drinkers will feel pain / and they will scream more and more / the devil will saturate them / he will pour fire and brimstone upon them.]

This list establishes an interesting connection between profession and sin. Not only are lords and judges among the sinners, their very daily duties and functional distinctions—ruling and judging—seem to be worthy of damnation, since judgment is mentioned particularly in connection with

[22] Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen, fol. 6r.
[23] Ibid.

the judges. Strong criticism of judges is also found in other genres, such as novels and fairy tales,[24] and often reaches the level of an overall criticism of the legal system that relies upon these people, which corresponds to the criticism of the Church relying upon unjust priests.[25] Authority, in this context, is a sin, alongside murder, defilement of virgins and theft—all of the other sins identified in connection with those doomed to hell are the result of voluntary decisions, while the authorities are endangered simply on the basis of their profession or, put another way, their responsibility for the *bonum commune*.

In light of these examples, it becomes clear that lay didactical literature not only includes several different knowledge systems, but also several different connected value systems. Most other oppositions support a social order where secular and ecclesiastical authorities are to be honored, where the rich are more powerful than the poor and where men rule over women and clerics over laypeople. But the focus on good and evil, and the explicit mention of the mighty among the evil points to the parallel existence of a different order, the order of virtue. Inspired by biblical examples and the sections of the Gospel suggesting status inversion, or by hundreds of years of fruitless criticism of self-righteous authorities in general, the opposition between good and evil represents the existence of a knowledge system that relies upon Jesus Christ's promise to the poor, the landless and the despised.

On the other hand, there are several hierarchically ordered oppositions that do not draw upon these Gospel promises, but rather serve to maintain the existing social order. The gender order is a crucial example even though its connection to the good-evil opposition remains ambiguous.

V.3 *Man and Woman*

The question of whether women belong to one or another order encompassed by Christianity, or are conceived of as standing outside of the order entirely, is a rarely discussed, probably delicate question in lay didactical literature. According to secular and canon law, women belong to their

[24] Examples in Meder, Theo. "Tales of tricks and greed and big surprises: Laymen's views of the law in Dutch oral narrative." *Humor* 21, no. 4 (2008).

[25] This might also be connected to the fact that priests holding lower grades of ordination often also served as judges and that generally the functions of the clergy and the judicial system were not entirely separated in the towns. Scheler, Dieter. "Patronage und Aufstieg im Niederkirchenwesen." In Schulz, ed. *Sozialer Aufstieg*, 315–336, ibid., 322.

husband's order in questions of social and economic status, as well as with regard to the juridical entity they constitute, although it took several centuries for this status quo to be established.[26] Unmarried women belong to their father's or brother's order and widows to their son's. There are many exceptions to this general rule—which is formulated in a number of catechetical texts, particularly in explanations of the Decalogue—as research into women's capacity to act as witnesses in court, as agents of their husband's affairs and to organize themselves in guilds has shown.[27] But this pragmatic level is rarely addressed in the religious texts: instead, the opposition man-woman serves as a metaphor for society in general, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as a model for a number of other oppositions. At least in some cases it is clearly distinguishable from other tropes that include women, particularly the husband-wife binomial, which I will address later.

The good-evil opposition is a subtext to the division between male and female. The fact that the female occupies the inferior position in the hierarchy between the male and female pole in western culture does not automatically lead to a connection between femininity and vice based on a parallel positioning of the two oppositions "male-female" and "virtue-vice". The metaphorization instead leads to a concept of gender that includes the possibility of transition, since there is a possible transition from virtue to vice based on one's free will. *Speygel der dogede* goes as far as expressing this:

> Nenerleye vnderschedinghe ys gode vnder mans kunnen edder vrouwen. Wente he richtet yo enen yeweliken na synem vordenste vnde werken. Vortmer na syner stedicheit vnde vnstedicheit. Vormiddelst dogheden wert eyne vrouwe eneme manne gheliket, ock umme undoghede willen wert eyn man vor en wyff gherekent.[28]
>
> [God makes no distinction between male and female gender, since he judges each and everyone based on their merit and deeds. Also based on their stability or instability. By means of virtue, a woman becomes like a man, and by means of vice, a man is counted as a woman.]

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[26] Synek, Eva M. "'Ex utroque sexu fidelium tres ordines'—The Status of Women in Early Medieval Canon Law." *Gender & History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 595.

[27] Cf. for example the introductions in the source collection Ketsch, Peter, and Annette Kuhn, eds. *Frauenarbeit im Mittelalter: Quellen u. Materialien*. Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983, 30–31 and 112–117.

[28] Speygel der dogede, fol. 18v.

The simultaneous usage of two different value and knowledge systems is obvious; one that values both genders equally and another that clearly places a higher value on the male gender and addresses the male-female opposition accordingly. Although the male appears to be associated with virtue and stability, these can be acquired by free will, and thus are not a matter of gender. Even if God does not distinguish between the genders, humans surely do.

Male-female oppositions are not quite as omnipresent in lay didactical texts as one would expect. One reason for this is that the female pole is often only implied, starting with a book's intended reading public. Prayer books and manuals for confession can occasionally include gender-specific paragraphs; for example, *Boek van de bedroffenisse Marien*, where a prayer for the reader's husband and children (*mynem manne unde mynen kynderen*) appears in the middle of an otherwise gender-neutral text.[29] A majority of the flaws discussed in manuals for confession in connection with explanations of the Sixth Commandment are male in nature—such as deflowering and violating a virgin—but they are not exclusively male. A possible female flaw included in the prohibition of adultery is, for example, bringing illegitimate children into one's husband's house. The question of the gender of the potential readers of the texts is clearly of minor importance: changing gender in the form of address does not disrupt the text or require justification. "All Christians," the form of address used in confessional books and catechisms, definitely includes both genders in contrast to the guidebooks for marriage, which target a male audience. The common definition in western culture of "male" as "the norm" and "female" as "deviance", or "the marked gender" applies for the catechetical books as well: most texts are implicitly directed to men and are oriented to everyday male life and sites of action—trade, politics, travel. Women appear as additional readers and as objects of pastoral care, but not as the norm. Consequently, a repeated articulation of the male-female dichotomy is unnecessary to the form of address; only in cases where female addressees are intended is it made explicit. The shift from male to female

[29] "Dyt naschreuen beth les wen du myt deme heren wylt spacyren ghan vnd lefliken myt em spreken, dat he to mi segghe. Kum du leue sele hebbe myt vns dat ewighe leuend. Dat yd my mǒghe beschen mynem manne vnd kynderen. Minen baren vrunden. Minen truwen vrunden minen bychtuederen, vnd allen dar ik plichtych bin vor to biddende de des begeren vnd bestedighe gude innyghe minschen in enen guden leuende." Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien, Lübeck 1498, fol. 158v.

forms of address derives from the compilatory character of many of the texts, and it probably says more about compilation techniques and reading habits than about the importance of gender differences. When looking at the addressees of lay didactical books, the male-female opposition does not seem to play a specifically important role; at least, it is not addressed or discussed within the texts, but rather plays a role in the underlying structure, male as the norm, female as a deviation that must be mentioned separately.[30]

More interesting in terms of the male-female dichotomy as a metaphor for society is its use in the general context of authority. The opposition can be interpreted as an example of the general need to maintain a natural and lawful order of people. This seems to be a bigger concern in texts that have a generally misogynist tendency—something that does not always correspond with the other categories of traditional clerical versus "anti-clerical" texts. The severely anti-clerical *Bokeken van deme repe*, for example, compares the image of a woman giving orders to men with the imagery of authority.[31]

> Don you think that he whom a women reigns over is free, over whom she sets the law? She calls, he approaches [. . .] How can you think he can be free in this way? He is not, but he is in severe service, might he be a king, a lord, a prince, a knight, a master, a monk, or a priest.[32]

The male-female opposition thus becomes the model for the free-unfree opposition and for several other hierarchical oppositions. Presenting the opposition in this way depicts freedom and its loss as in some way a voluntary decision, with obedience being the main factor that establishes subordination across the social groups and within all of the possible oppositions. The same relationship between the gender difference and authority is apparent in catechetical works, where disobedience is often presented as a typically female sin, which is clarified by referring to the duty to obey one's husband: *Hefstu in unhorsam geholden dinen*

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[30] This phenomenon has been observed and analyzed by numerous scholars. For a comprehensive analysis of gender codes in language and discourse, see Mills, Sara. *Feminist stylistics*. London: Routledge, 1998.

[31] Bast cites a number of other sections in the *Bokeken* that prove it to be particularly concerned with the problem of female subjugation and domination. Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 75–78.

[32] "Wo dunket dy, is he gicht vry, den de vrouwe regeret unde besit, den se de ee settet? Ropt se, he kumpt [. . .] Wo meinstu, dat en sodane vry is? Enkede nicht, sunder he is in groteme denste, he sy ein konink, ein here, ein vorste, ein ridder, ein mester, ein monnik edder ein pape." Bokeken van deme repe, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 179.

heren, dinen man edder dynen vader [Have you disobeyed your lord, your husband or your father.][33]

The interconnection among different dichotomies leads to an interconnection among all the superior poles and among all of the inferior poles. It is impossible to determine which metaphor was the first to introduce the hierarchy, but the hierarchical implication of each of the poles in this series of dichotomies is strengthened by the interconnection among them. The relation between man and woman is compared to the one between confessor and penitent or between abbot and monk. It is to be presumed that other oppositional relations ordered according to the principles of subordination and obedience can also be interconnected, as the quotation from the *Bokeken van deme repe* above suggests.

man		husband		lord		confessor		free		abbot
woman	=	wife	=	servant	=	penitent	=	unfree	=	monk

The connotation of the woman as the inferior pole in the male-female-dichotomy is so strong and so unquestioned that it even serves to establish and elucidate other biased pairs such as "confessor and penitent" or, most commonly, "lord and servant". The strict correspondence of the poles of the male-female opposition with hierarchies, rights of possession, freedom and activity-passivity derives from a context of law, family and heritage, as well as from the clerical and spiritual sphere.

But when it comes to an order of virtue, the connection of the poles to hierarchies becomes less clear. Sometimes men are considered more virtuous, and on other occasions women are: the oppositions "righteous-wicked" or "good-evil" have no clear gender assignment. Since most of the catechetical advice books have men as their primary audience, they are more preoccupied with possible male flaws, and many of the dangers envisaged occur in the daily life spheres of men, specifically male merchants and travelers. All sins connected to trade, betrayal, cheating and usury seem to place men in a position in which they are more exposed to sin. Uncontrolled desire, sexual violence, bestiality and masturbation are also ascribed to men rather than to women, except in texts directed to virgins, where it is common for both genders to be addressed. In this context, the Hussite *Bokeken van deme repe* reveals itself to be not only misogynist,

[33] Licht der Seelen, fol. 21v.

but generally misanthropic, and portrays men as the inferior pole of the virtuous hierarchy and "entirely corrupted by a lack of chastity."[34] So in this case, men are clearly assigned the superior pole in the male-female opposition, but the inferior pole in the good-evil opposition.

Other texts solve this problem differently. As shown above, books of advice for virgins and young people in general focus on young women and admonish them to beware of vanity, dancing, levity and unchaste behavior—although men play the active and seductive role, women are still held responsible for their lack of virtuous resistance. Consequently, in this case, women are assigned the inferior pole in both the male-female and the good-evil oppositions.

There is even a potential third solution, namely, not connecting the good-evil opposition to the gender opposition at all. The translated best-seller *Hemmelsche funtgrove*, for example, claims that men and women are going to be saved in equal numbers,[35] which indicates that vice and virtue do not depend on gender.

As such, the opposition between the genders does not work as a clear and proper assignment of vice and virtue, but it does serve as an important structuring element for the social order. This becomes particularly clear in those cases where the danger of a disruption of the order is mentioned, specifically cases where women rise to the top of the hierarchy, either by literally ruling over a man or in terms of sexual conduct. The right order for people and the importance of remaining within the established hierarchical boundaries also raises sexual concerns or, at least, can be legitimized by the concern about women occupying the superior pole. Women being on top can mean an actual sex position, as in the description of a specific violation of the Sixth Commandment.

> Hefstu unkuscheyt vullenbracht in unrechter wyse, alleine edder sulff ander dat is grotter sunde, wen dattu haddest gesundighet mit dyner eghenen

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[34] "Ok wete, dat goth deme manne vorbuth de begheringhe der vrommeden vrouwen, in dem gaff he to vorstande dat meinliken de manne mer begheren vrommede vrouwen, wen den vrouwen vrommede manne, unde dar bin ik wis ane wente ik hebbe eer vunden XX echte vrouwen, dede nicht vordoruen weren mit bozer begheringe vrommeder manne, wen einen echten man, wente leider de manne synt gantz sere vordoruen mit unkuscheit." Bokeken van deme repe, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 165.

[35] "Dat i summe trôstynghe willen tweerleye mynschen, frouwe und manne, de dor vorloset synt und mogen beyde salich werden und vellichte ock in ghelyker thal, also vele vrouwen alse menne werden salych, na menynge etliker lerer." Hemmelsche funtgrove, fol. 21v.

> moder in rechter wyse, alse Augustinus sprekt unde dat heilige recht. Augustinus: dat is schande, dat de vrouwe helt dat swert unde de man de spille.[36]
>
> [Have you performed unchastity in an illegitimate way, on your own or together. That is a bigger sin than if you had sinned with your own mother in the appropriate way, as Augustine and the Holy Law both say. Augustine: it is shameful when the woman holds the sword and the man the spindle.]

In rechter wyse and *in unrechter wyse*, the right and the wrong way of engaging in sexual intercourse can refer to a variety of practices and positions, from homosexual practices to anal sex or any position except for a man on top and a woman facing him.[37] "Alone or with others" points to the canonical definition of homosexuality, bestiality and masturbation as sins *contra naturam*, which are encompassed by a comprehensive Latin terminology and discourse of avoidance, punishment and contrition.[38] The explanation provided in the quotation ascribed to Augustine evokes the entire discourse of female subjugation, male effeminacy and the order of the genders.[39] The metaphoric formulation that equates "sword" and "spindle" with male and female gender is so widespread that the terms can be used synonymously, both in medieval German vernaculars and in some modern languages such as Polish, where "sword-side" and "spindle-side" are still used to identify the male and female sides of the family.[40] In the medieval German vernaculars, the connection of sword and spindle is not exclusive to the Middle Low German dialect, but is also found in High German, Early High German, etc. They include a variety of potential compound words, as in the term *swertmach*, [male relative][41] and those based on *spille*, [spindle]; cognatic relations, such as *spillemach*, [female

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[36] Licht der Seelen, fol. 31r, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 133.

[37] Some of the many available definitions of the "vice against nature" from penitential literature in Payer, Pierre J. *Sex and the new medieval literature of confession: 1150–1300*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009, 126–132.

[38] The research on this topic is vast. See for example Puff, Helmut. *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, 50–73, with further references.

[39] A survey of, for example, the canonical view of proper coital positions as expressed in the *Summa theologica* can be found in Jordan, Mark D. "Homosexuality, Luxuria, and Textual Abuse." In *Constructing medieval sexuality*. Ed. by Karma Lochrie et al., 24–39. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

[40] "Po mieczu," (miecz=sword) on the male side of the family, "po kądzieli," (kądziel=spindle) on the female side of the family. Thanks to Dr. Wojtek Jezierski for drawing my attention to this.

[41] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch IV*, 493.

relative], or *spilleside*, [female side of the family].[42] The assignment of the quotation to Augustine might simply be an attempt to attach an authoritative voice to a widely acknowledged fact, and its usage as a sexual metaphor derives from the profound significance of the order of genders and of the behavior appropriate to each of them.

The woman holding the sword and the man holding the spindle serves in the context of the Sixth Commandment as a figurative—and very pronounced—metaphor for sexual practices where the woman takes the lead and male and female connoted practices—fighting and spinning—are undertaken by the "wrong" gender. The sword in the hand of the woman also points to her using some device for penetration, and a man penetrating himself this way is just as guilty of a sin, as are two men or any other possible combination of people penetrating each other with anything other than a penis. The heterosexual act of penetration becomes the ultimate model for the social order: the man on top and penetrating, the woman below and being penetrated. As a consequence, the identification of the superior pole in all oppositions connected with the male-female opposition is easy, with the exception of the virtuous-vile opposition.

man	=	husband	=	lord	=	confessor	=	free	=	abbot
woman		wife		servant		penitent		unfree		monk

man	=	penetrating	=	dominant	=	virtuous?
woman		penetrated		obedient		vile?

This indicates a general tendency of the metaphors for society in lay didactical literature: all the traditional forms created and perpetrated in order to maintain and explain a hierarchical order based on status, birth and ordination are still in use, but can be charged with something else entirely—the order of virtue. There is always a point in the analogy of oppositions, in the change of the target domain of metaphors or elsewhere, where the old forms come to contain a new meaning and to represent a new order. In the case of the male-female-dichotomy, its use is not related in the least to any egalitarian impetus that traverses the discursive differences in the texts. However, the opposition still manifests the possibility of disorder,

[42] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch IV*, 326–327. The same applies for other German dialects.

resulting from the lack of clarity about the assignment of one of the most important dichotomies to either the superior or the inferior pole of the gendered opposition. Gender and authority are deeply intertwined: they become almost synonymous. While the female is always connected to the inferior pole of all other oppositions, whether she is assigned to the vile or the virtuous pole is open to discussion. At one point at least, women have access to the superior pole of a symbolic order. It is questionable, however, whether in this case women are defined entirely by gender or if only married women are intended, as the limited incidents of the man-woman opposition compared to the numerous examples of the husband-wife opposition would suggest.

V.4 *Husband and Wife*

A basic difference between Catholic medieval and Protestant ideology is said to be the sanctification of married life and daily life in the context of the idea that some orders and ways of life expressed a superior vocation and thereby could lay claim to a greater degree of authority than others.[43] Encompassed by the central terms "all Christians" and "authority," this concept of the social order is, however, clearly visible by the fifteenth century, and the sanctification of married life was a project that canonists and theologians had been pursuing since the twelfth century.[44]

The demarcation of the virgins as a social group with a certain status is replaced in lay didactical literature by a concept of virginity as a moral choice that can be exercised anywhere and as part of any lifestyle, even if the monastery would be the preferred and most fitting setting. A similar shift is apparent regarding the semantics of marriage: from a social order with a defined inferior place in the social hierarchy to a life choice that is as suitable for salvation as any other. The married order is the point at which the connection between the old moral division and the Lutheran three orders is most obvious. In the traditional concept it is an order with a limited value for salvation, but it is still within the range of those who can be saved. The Lutheran concept, on the other hand, places each and every person within this order, thereby not only neglecting celibacy but also remaining true to the fear of unmarried women. Middle Low German

[43] Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," 103.

[44] Cartlidge, Neil. *Medieval marriage: Literary approaches; 1100–1300*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1997, 17–19.

didactical literature shows the transition from marriage as the lowest grade of merit to marriage as a general order everybody belongs to, and this is in no small part due to the fact that the texts target laypeople and their spiritual development. For laypeople, marriage is synonymous with social status, and through the interconnection of social status, law and social order, "the married order" becomes significant for the social stratification of society and the relationship of people, goods and status.[45]

This does not mean a new, increased or original discourse on marriage itself, as has been shown by scholars dealing with medieval concepts of marriage and the theological discourse on marriage.[46] Canonists, philosophers and preachers had been busy defining and debating marriage for several hundred years. The importance of marriage as a sacrament and as a social and legal institution was widely acknowledged, and a wise choice of spouse and the relationship between the partners were topics of mirrors of princes, sermons in the vernacular and lay didactical literature alike.[47] In our context, it is not marriage as an institution or the different concepts of marriage that are of interest, but rather the use of the opposition "husband-wife" as a model for other social relations or as a metaphor for society in general. Marriage imagery was derived from the Scripture and used to address religious bonds as well as social bonds, with the aspects of consent, love and mutuality being central to the metaphor.[48] In the lay didactical literature, the focus is on subordination instead.

In contrast to virgins and widows, "the married" as the third group in the moral tripartition play a considerable role in lay didactical literature, but not necessarily in the form of a binomial, and often the demarcation between "man and woman", on the one hand, and "husband and wife", on the other hand, is unclear. Most often, husbands and wives are mentioned because of the significance of marriage in the Decalogue and the general preoccupation of handbooks for confession with sexual flaws and sins,

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45 Gottschalk, Karin. "Does Property have a Gender? Household Goods and Conceptions of Law and Justice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Saxony." *The Medieval History Journal* 8 (2005): 20.

46 Also here, the number of recent studies is overwhelming. Some examples: Karras, Ruth M. *Unmarriages: Women, men, and sexual unions in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012; D'Avray, D. L. *Medieval marriage: Symbolism and society*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005; Rousseau, Constance M. and Joel T. Rosenthal, eds. *Women, marriage, and family in medieval Christendom*. Kalamazoo, Mi: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998.

47 Signori, Gabriela. *Von der Paradiesehe zur Gütergemeinschaft: Die Ehe in der mittelalterlichen Lebens- und Vorstellungswelt*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verl., 2011, 13–55.

48 Cartlidge, *Medieval marriage*, 12.

most of which are subsumed under adultery and the violation of marriage. These topics are discussed in connection with the Sixth and Ninth Commandments, but also occur frequently in the different lists of sins; the mortal sins, especially lust, sins against the senses, the mute sins, and so on. As was the case for the man-woman opposition, mention of husband and wife is also sometimes explicit, and they are sometimes included among the addressees of the text. Additionally, there are two Middle Low German treatises on marriage, both close translations of Augsburg texts and, as such, translated bestsellers that deal with the husband-wife opposition. Their presentation of the relationship between husband and wife as based on consent, as well as on male violence and female obedience, constitutes an understanding of the relationship between the spouses that differs from the way the relationship is presented in other catechetical texts, where (canonically and theologically supported) concepts of marriage instead rely on consent and a certain notion of equality based on different spheres assigned to the genders.[49]

Given the fact that the catechetical and didactical books address the laity in general, it would be expected that the didactical focus on married people would increase, resulting in the production of many texts in a distinct genre of marital didactics—and this is what we find if we look at the production of incunabula and manuscripts in the southern German lands, as well as in northern Italy. Members of different mendicant orders wrote a variety of texts of both male and female pastoral care in the vernaculars, defining marriage not only as an order qualified for salvation, but as a representation of humankind and its general need for salvation.[50] With the mendicant's decreasing resistance to also assigning laypeople a spiritual significance, rules for the married order became increasingly common. In pre-Reformation text production, there is a very close connection between marriage guidebooks and guidebooks for the heads of households (*Hausväterliteratur*), since the perception of marriage as an order is a forerunner of the Lutheran concept of the family as one of the three orders of society.[51]

Yet again, however, the situation was entirely different in the Middle Low German area. Most of the popular books in the incunabula in southern Germany, some of which also circulated during and after the

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[49] Ibid., 17.

[50] Wehrli-Johns, "Frauenfrömmigkeit," 32–34, brings the examples of Johannes Dominici and his *Regola del governo di cura familiare* and Andreas Proles.

[51] Schorn-Schütte, "Drei-Stände-Lehre," 443f.

Reformation, were never translated into Middle Low German such as, for example, the *Ehebüchlein* by Albrecht of Eyb, which never migrated to the northern print production centers.

One author from the Middle German region, Andreas Proles, wrote several texts that were printed in both High and Middle Low German, but his *Regula coniugatorum* was never printed, and its edition in the Johannes of Paltz' *Supplementum coelifodina* was never translated from Latin. In the *Regula coniugatorum*, as an update of scholastic dogma about marriage, Andreas Proles combined moral and functional reasons for the married order, representing marriage as a means for producing offspring and resisting sexual desire, based on an exegesis of Gn 2:24. Additionally, he provides an exegesis of Gn 3:19 that posits marriage as a precondition for the penitential state, as having a wife is said to be the only possible way of eating one's bread by the sweat of one's brow.[52] However, this sort of learned discourse on the biblical basis for marriage did not make its way into the popular printed texts. In spite of the focus of the canonist and of theological debates on the question of marriage, marital metaphors and "husband-wife" as a binomial were not predominant in lay didactical texts.

The terminology addressing married couples is, as has been previously mentioned, sometimes difficult to distinguish from male-female oppositions, since the terms "husband" and "wife" are sometimes used synonymously with "man" and "woman". Besides *man vnde wyf*, husband and wife can also be referred to as *echte gade, echte mensche* and *echte geselle*.[53] The adjective "married" does not exist on its own in Middle Low German: it is expressed as a circumscription—*in dem eeliken stade, in dem eeliken stole* [in the marital order, in the marital chair].

Middle Low German *ee/e/ehe* usually means "law," especially regarding the Old and New Testament, and more generally religious law or convention. Its use for marriage is also to be found, but this is less common and occurs only in legal texts and diploma. Similarly, *ebrekeri* means both "transgressing the law in general" and "committing adultery".[54] When used to mean the latter, the notion of marriage as a sacrament similar to the monastic vows is notable:

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[52] A paraphrase of the text by Andreas Proles in Wehrli-Johns, "Frauenfrömmigkeit," 34–35.

[53] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch I*, 621–623.

[54] *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch I*, 618–619.

> Hefstu ein ebreker gewesen, so hefstu gesundiget also wedder godes licham, darumme dat echte leuent is eyn sacramente. Item du hefst gesundiget alse en monnik, de dar lopt ut synem orden.[55]
>
> [Have you committed adultery? Then you have sinned against the body of Christ, since marriage is a sacrament. And you have sinned like a monk who flees his order.]

The sacramental nature of marriage—or the Christianization of marriage—was a hot topic in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Before that point, it had had the character of a legal agreement rather than of a sacrament, and it had not been common for a ceremony to accompany the signing of the contract. As Georges Duby—and many medievalists who later discussed his research—stated, the objective of making a sacred ceremony necessary for marriage to be legally binding was part of the ecclesiastical attempt to gain control over this important area of the lay legal sphere. The attempt was successful: by the Late Middle Ages, the presence of a priest and a wedding ceremony including a liturgy were common all over Europe, and thus the concept of marriage as a sacrament could be considered as common sense.[56]

In catechetical literature, marriage is rarely referred to as an order: rather, it is referred to as a sacrament, and is consequently dealt with not only in connection with the Decalogue, but also as the seventh of the sacraments. The term used for the sacrament most often is *echte levende*, "marital life."[57] At the same time, however, the semantics of marriage contain the profane legal character of a contract. More common than *ee* for marriage as an institution—not the wedding, which does not have a term of its own—are *echt/echte, echteschop* and *echte levende*. The complex has two other meanings as well: "legitimacy" in a legal context, such as a legitimate child, and, although rarely used, "order" in general.

With the *echte* being partly synonymous for "marital" and "based on the law," as well as "true" and "real," marriage is deeply rooted in the semantic and legal framework of the Middle Low German language. The strong semantic connection between marriage and the law positions the status of married people both within the range of secular law and within the range of ecclesiastical sacramental government and, as a result,

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55 Licht der Seelen, fol. 34v.

56 Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage*, 13.

57 "Wo men bichten schal van dem vij sacramente, alsze van deme echten leuende. Heffstu dynen echten gesellen nicht leeff gehat in rechter leue […]" Licht der Seelen, fol. 19r.

the husband-wife opposition is deeply rooted in this double legal and semantic framework. An additional aspect of this shift, and above all of the increased importance of the laity in a spiritual sense, is the number of family metaphors used in the texts.

Regarding the question of marriage as part of a metaphor describing society, the connection to marital metaphors in the Bible is equally fundamental as the vernacular legal traditions. While the narrative of creation in Gn 2:22 and the letters of St. Paul concerning life in the community are points of reference for theological and canonist debates about marriage, the most prominent reference points for marital metaphors are the prophetic books, which have been the subject of intense discussion in feminist scholarship.[58] The relationship between God as "husband" and Jerusalem/Israel as "wife" is described in violent images of adultery, punishment and rape. The act of adultery committed by Jerusalem—serving another God—leads to a kind of "corrective rape" by the husband.[59] The target domain of the metaphor is the Israelites; the source domain can be a wife, a prostitute, a whore, a daughter—a variety of female roles all defined by their subordination and sinfulness and, even more importantly, by their subjugation to a man who has the right to punish them. In this way family relations, which are basically structured by the balance of power between man and wife and father and daughter, become models for the relationship between God and humans and consequently between humans and humans. In the context of post-war and post-exile Israel, God's violence against his "wife" is interpreted as a means to heal their relationship. The positive turn in the narrative is expressed in a shift from a marital to a paternal metaphor set in motion by the female act of self-blaming that takes responsibility for the disturbance in the relationship. According to the prophetic tradition, the two strongest aspects of marriage are its character as an order with mutual rights and duties—covenant—and the flaw of adultery, which is similar to leaving a monastic order—or violating the covenant—and will immediately lead to punishment at the husband's hands. This notion of marriage and adultery repeatedly appears in Middle Low German didactical literature.

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[58] Baumann, Gerlinde. *Liebe und Gewalt: Die Ehe als Metapher für das Verhältnis JHWH, Israel in den Prophetenbüchern.* Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2000, 18–32.

[59] Ibid., 18–32. Especially in Os 2,4–25; Ier 13, 20–27. A complete list of prophetical marriage metaphors can be found in *ibid.*, 51.

The context of marriage metaphors in the prophetic books legitimizes God's punishment of his "unfaithful wife," and at the same time serves as an image of marriage as a relationship in which the proper order is reestablished by male (sexual) violence. This concept of marriage as a metaphor for a general order of mutual rights and duties[60] that has to be (re)established through the use of violence by the stronger towards the weaker member is discernible in the Middle Low German treatises as well.

As for texts explicitly dealing with marriage, Middle Low German didactical literature includes two examples: the pseudo-Aristotelian *Sermo de matrimonio*[61] printed in Lübeck in 1478,[62] and the pseudo-Bernhardinian *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris*.[63] Both follow a High German model text, printed in Augsburg. Neither uses any of the traditional metaphors for marriage or places it in a hierarchy of social orders, but marriage is conceived of as the only possible form of social life, extending beyond all other social inequalities. The objective of marital advice for laypeople is not to discuss the advantages of marriage in contrast to other forms of living, but to address the requirement to marry, thereby legitimizing marriage as a prerequisite of the genre. Considering the common features of these two texts—close connections to a Latin model text, a clerical author and (noble) lay audiences as their original target—both Middle Low German examples of marital advice can be assigned to the discursive field of translated bestsellers.

Sermo de matrimonio, called *Ene schone lefflike lere vnde vnderwysinge wo ein iewelick man syn husz regeren schal* in Middle Low German precludes itself from the outset as a treatise on marriage with this choice of title, since it does not include the binomial husband and wife. The entire text is directed to all men:

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[60] Mutual rights and duties, as contained in the covenant, are the basis of the Hebrew concepts of justice and mercy. Cf. for example Zehetbauer, Markus. *Die Polarität von Gerechtigkeit und Barmherzigkeit: Ihre Wurzeln im Alten Testament, im Frühjudentum sowie in der Botschaft Jesu*. Regensburg: Verlag F. Pustet, 1999.

[61] On the tradition of the texts, see the above chapter I.3 on adaptations and reprints from other German dialects.

[62] Eene lere, wo sick twe Minschen in dem Sakrament der Ee holden scholen. [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca. 1478].

[63] See appendix under *Lehre*.

> Sunte bernhardus beschrift eyne schone lefflike lere vnde vnderwisinge eyneme iewelken manne iunck edder olt.[64]
>
> [Saint Bernhard wrote an appealing and useful doctrine and instruction for all men, young and old.]

This text does not use "husband and wife" as a binomial, but places the man in the center and arrays his wife and other family members, friends and allies around him. The similarities of the text in this regard not to other treatises on marriage, but to didactical literature in general, for example, sermons and catechisms, have already been established.[65]

The main point made here is that it is the man's duty to rule over his servants, to choose both a wife and his circle of friends wisely.[66] While the text presents the man in relation to other people around him—household, family and friends—marriage is not perceived as being essential to his status. All of the social and financial activities are operative both before and after a man's marriage, and his wife is only one person among others. The tenor of the text derives from German translations of the Latin original, and the Middle Low version only includes a few changes that affect the title and the introduction. That the translation addresses itself to a local nobleman, as did the Early High German model text, and references not only the entire household, but the household income in the form of *gewinst nuth vnde renthe* [profit, benefit and annuity],[67] points to an economically well-off upper class, either noble or non-noble, as the target audience. Even the statements regarding the dangers of making one's son the administrator of one's goods point in this direction.[68]

It is worth mentioning that a text for heads of households does not require the binomial "husband and wife", and thereby negates a hierarchical but intimate relationship between the two. The pseudo-Bernhardinian text instead depicts marriage as a necessary duty, equal to other business affairs.

The other treatise on marriage within the sample, *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris*, traditionally also presented as a guidebook for the

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[64] Schone lefflike lere, cit. after Cossar, 319.

[65] Schwitalla, Johannes. "Textsortenstile und Textherstellungsverfahren in Ehetraktaten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts." In *Text und Geschlecht: Mann und Frau in Eheschriften der frühen Neuzeit*. Ed. by Rüdiger Schnell, 79–114. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, ibid., 86.

[66] Schone lefflicke lere, cit. after Cossar, 319–327.

[67] Ibid., 324.

[68] Ibid., 326.

head of the household, is published in the Middle Low German version under the title *Eene lere, wo sick twe Minschen in dem Sakrament der Ee holden scholen* [a lesson on how two people are supposed to behave within the sacrament of marriage].[69] The guidelines for men and women respectively are called *regel*, similar to the *regulae* and canons that define the orders of monks.

> Dat is mit vlite to merken, wente een islike orde hefft syne regule, darumme in deme orden der Ee is gegeuen den mannen ere regule wo se leuen scholen, unde ok den vruwen bisunderen wo se sik suluen holden.[70]
>
> [This is to be observed diligently, because every order has its rule, and therefore in the married order, the men have received their rule about how to live, as have the women, particularly how they should behave.]

Identifying marriage as a prominent sacrament and then underscoring the importance of marriage with a rule is a strategic decision that corresponds to the importance marriage is assigned in the rest of the text. Order and sacrament do not constitute an either-or decision: marriage is more significant than either of them. It is said to be established by God and therefore to be of a superior rank to the monastic orders, which are founded by men.[71]

The structure of the text suggests reciprocity in the order of marriage: the first book *wo twe minschen in der Ee gotliken leuen scholen* contains four chapters each for men and women. It is claimed that the *regula* for wives was written by *Anna de hillige iuncfruwe Tobyas swegersche dat se em eer dochter Sara ghaff*—a somewhat obscure source in the context. It intends to call to mind the apocryphal book of Tobit, whose second wife Sara married him after the intervention of an angel. Before this, Sara had been married to seven men, all of whom were killed by the demon Ashmodit before the marriage was consummated. While Sara's mother is not named in the Bible, reference is made to her father, who was desperate and could not find another man for her before the angel intervened to save them. Besides Anna's unknown rule, the text itself frequently claims Johannes Chrysostomus as a source of information, but neither of these

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[69] With this title, presented in larger letters, and thereby being a prominent part of the text, the publisher deliberately chose not to call marriage an order, but a sacrament. No synonymity of 'order' and 'sacrament' in Middle Low German has been otherwise documented. *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch* does not include an entry about sacrament.

[70] Eene lere, 306v.

[71] Eene lere, fol. 306r.

assertions can be verified.[72] Rather than Anna, sister-in-law of Tobias, another Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, would have been a more suitable source for a rule for married women; nevertheless, the connection of rules for married women and the Book of Tobit has a model in a rule for married people circulating in the Windesheim congregations. While the regulations established for the husbands differ, *Eene lere* resembles quite closely the rules for women found in this manuscript for members of the *Devotio moderna* movement, with the Book of Tobit being mentioned as the source here as well.[73]

The book on the husbands in *Eene Lere* presents St. Paul's letters (1 Cor 7) and the writings of the Church Fathers in general as its sources. Additionally, it is necessary to mention canon law: the second book is about those "who will be doomed because of their marriage," *we an deme eeliken leuende verdoempt scholen werden*. It includes eight cases from canon law that might negate a marriage, such as infertility or the partners being related. The title of book III, *Van viij stade der minschen in der Ee*, states that within the married order it is still crucial to remain within the framework of the law, otherwise damnation is waiting regardless of the fact the partners are in an accepted order.[74]

Up to this point, the Middle Low German treatise on marriage suggests reciprocity in marriage and claims to compile the rules for men and for women in their respective places in the married order; *Eene lere* draws conclusions based on an exegesis of the creation narrative in the book of Genesis: God created the woman neither from the man's head nor his foot, but from his rib, so that she should be equal to him, not his superior nor his inferior. A specific notion of "equality" of the genders is, however, clarified by the first instruction to the husband:

> Darumme schal een yslick man syn wiff in maten holden / nicht to week dat se nicht to gheil werde unde auer den horsam trede.[75]
>
> [Therefore, every man shall hold his wife in moderation, not too gently, so that she does not become too wanton and transgress obedience.]

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[72] Eene lere, fol. 307v. Brinkhus, *Bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation*, 54 & 125.

[73] This, of course, merely points to the relationship between the Windesheim manuscript and the *Epistola de gubernatione de rei familaris*, but it is interesting that the rules for husbands differ, while the rules for wives are closely copied. The Windesheim manuscript is cited in Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 67–68.

[74] Eene lere, fol. 308v.

[75] Ibid., fol. 306r.

Similar advice for women to keep their husbands under control is not to be found. The rule for men generally is very different from that for women: the chapter "how a man shall punish a mean wife and how a woman shall educate a mean man" only includes advice about punishing a wife, culminating in the intimation that if a wife's behavior does not improve despite punishment, *so suchtighe se besunderen des morgens in deme bedde myt ener roden unde dwinck se na dynem willen* [beat her with a birch switch in the morning in the bed in particular and constrain her to your will].[76] Similar rules for women are lacking as, generally, advice for married women seems to be comprised of advice about how to behave in order to keep a husband. Advice for married men, on the other hand, is primarily made up of advice about how to choose a wife and how to educate her.[77] The promised but not realized interdependence of duties, not only in terms of sexual intercourse, but also the husband's extensive rights to physical and sexual punishment and the subordination of the marital relationship to the rule of the head of the household are characteristics of the text's marital advice,[78] and they shape the concept of marriage as a hierarchical order consisting of the husband-wife couple. The fact that gender roles are also constructed as a hierarchy within marriage does not come as a surprise. But regarding the question of the construction of the married order, the one-sided orientation of the text to the husband makes clear not only that he is the person who is essential for constructing the category, but also the only autonomous member within the married order. Women are defined as members of the married order only in relation to their husbands. The married order is clearly a gendered one: it is another male order, and as such a model for other hierarchic relations.

Even though this text is less misogynist than treatises on marriage that are directed entirely to a Latin-speaking clerical public,[79] it shows a distinct asymmetry in terms of including men and women in the married order and in describing their mutual duties, rights and spheres of action.

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[76] Ibid., fol. 309r.

[77] On the lack of reciprocity in the High German version of the Sermo, see Puff, Helmut. "'ein schul / darinn wir allerlay Christliche tugend vnd zucht lernen.' Ein Vergleich zweier ehedidaktischer Schriften des 16. Jahrhunderts." In *Geschlechterbeziehungen und Textfunktionen: Studien zu Eheschriften der frühen Neuzeit*. Ed. by Rüdiger Schnell, 59–88. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998, ibid., 81–84.

[78] The punishments are compiled according to late medieval penitential *summae*: the equation of matrimony with the *regimen familiae* had already been established in the Latin *Sermo de matrimonio*. Brinkhus, *Bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation*, 54–55.

[79] Schnell, Rüdiger. *Frauendiskurs, Männerdiskurs, Ehediskurs: Textsorten und Geschlechterkonzepte in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit.* Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verl., 1998, 15.

Simply the fact that the text includes a collection of rules from the penitentiary *summae* does not justify the biased presentation of the rights and duties for men and women, as canon law had a far more equal approach to the partners: the *Summa to dude*, for example, includes, in the chapters on marriage, actual significant rights assigned to women, not only duties[80] and, as was previously mentioned, the canonists placed a strong emphasis on consent and on the equality of the partners.

Back to *Eene lere*, the rule for the male branch of the married order deals with the assignment of men's authority over their wives in four chapters, just as Christ is the head of the Church—recalling the body metaphor—and includes punishments and education determined by a wife's character. The second chapter deals with the times when sexual intercourse is legal or illegal, as well as acceptable and unacceptable forms of sexual intercourse. Chapter three warns against permitting one's wife too much luxury, and chapter four warns against punishing a wife too severely, except if she is *eenwillich unde wedderstreuich boze unde tornich unde unvredich unde tho gheil* [indignant and headstrong, mean and angry and troubling and too wanton].

The rule for women is structured in a parallel way. Chapter one contrasts the punishments and the treatment acceptable in a husband when dealing with his wife with the love a wife must show her husband, even if he doesn't return her love. Chapter two, in parallel to the canonical requirements regarding sexual intercourse for men, admonishes the wife to fulfil her marital duties and govern the household. Chapters three and four contain further necessary female duties within marriage and admonish the wife to maintain her good reputation. The man's duty to punish his wife has its parallel in her duty to punish her maids and servants.[81]

The perception of marriage as a male order that ascribes disproportionate rights to husbands is somewhat text-specific for the treatises, but it is not specific to the Middle Low German region. The treatises on marriage from the southern regions show the same asymmetry when addressing men and women, and the alterations and adjustments made by the Middle Low German translator are not significantly different from the German model texts. The *Lere* belongs to the category of "translated bestsellers" and confirms the impression that these bestsellers are more traditional and hierarchical, not only in terms of promoting the clergy, but also in

[80] Summa to dude, letter E, chapters 55–57.
[81] Eene lere, fol. 308r.

terms of promoting male superiority. This does not mean that the Middle Low German region should be considered less misogynist than the south, but for some reason treatises on marriage were not as popular as they were in the south.

The relationship between husband and wife metaphorically represents the general social order, conceived antithetically and based on the hierarchical relation between God and humans. The head of the household is at the top of the hierarchy, and his social status derives from his gender and his authority, which is established on the basis of Scripture. Peace between the partners and care for their mutual family are alleged to be the cornerstone of society: spouses living in discord is said to be a reason for God to punish mankind.[82] Again we see the connection between marriage and the God-human relationship.

It is crucial that the text references a body metaphor instead of maintaining the complementary relationship between husband and wife, with the husband as the head of the household and a parallel positioning of the power relationship between God and humans and that between husband and wife. The husband as the head of the household/body expresses an entirely different relationship between husband and wife than does a binomial, which focuses on both and does not include the wife as simply one of a number of limbs (which limb is not even clarified).

The shift from a binomial, as intended in the structure of the book which has corresponding chapters for man and wife, to a body metaphor is expanded upon in another section of the incunabulum, interestingly enough one that is not a translation, but seems to be original to the Middle Low German version of *Eene lere, wo sick twen minschen . . . holden schalen*. An appendix to the text that is not taken from the High German model lays out nine requirements for all Christians, delivered in the context of marital advice. These present marriage exclusively in connection to the God-human relationship, and thereby do not deal with marriage as the lowest order of merit, but as the cornerstone of society and as a metaphor for all other relationships as being grounded in the antithetical concept of man and woman, and in the connection of marriage to both canonical and secular laws. The main body of this appendix presents marriage through the metaphor of the husband as the head and the wife as one subordinate limb among others—again a body metaphor. The appendix uses marriage

[82] Ibid., fol. 310r.

as a metaphor for the mutual love of two unequal parts: "husband and wife" is the equivalent of "Christ and humans", a binomial. Jesus is repeatedly called both "your lord" [*din here*] and "your lover" [*din leefhebber*] in this section. In some sentences, Christ is the first-person narrator,[83] and thus the marital imagery is conveyed as an imagery of domination and love that functions *on the basis of* marriage, particularly in the context of the marital advice that precedes the nine attached rules. The rules mainly serve to constitute a hierarchy of spiritual merits: it is better to cry over one's sins than beat oneself up, better to give alms than conduct a crusade, better to sleep less and pray more than to go on a pilgrimage. Easily decoded, the objective of these rules is maintaining a functioning daily life and social order rather than promoting extraordinary ascetic and pious deeds, and this is considered equal to a married life. That the married order has become the model for a virtuous life is well-grounded in both canonical and secular laws and in the analogy addressing the relationship between God and Israel. From this to the Lutheran third order, which everyone is a member of, is a small step.

Besides the two translated treatises on marital life, the relationship between husband and wife is also addressed in catechetical books, and here it is basically expressed as an opposition, with the husband being the implicit addressee of the text and the wife being the other. This derives from a certain, but not necessary, understanding of the Ten Commandments as directed to men, particularly the Ninth Commandment: "You shall not desire someone else's wife."[84] The prohibition of desiring someone else's wife is not a necessary part of the explanations of this Commandment, though: it can also be restricted to the prohibition of desiring someone else's goods, animals and servants.[85] Furthermore, marriage is not the only institution where these relations are relevant: an explanation of the Decalogue translates the Ninth Commandment as

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[83] For example he tells the reader "to love me above all things." "Dat ix, hebbe my leeff bauen alle dink." Eene lere, fol. 311v.

[84] The content of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments is in the late medieval catechetic literature obviously not standardized. The comparative study of catechisms in different German vernaculars of the fifteenth century by Geffcken counts more than ten different versions of the differentiation between "You shall not desire someone else's good" and "You shall not desire someone else's wife, cattle, house etc." Sometimes even "you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" is counted as the Ninth Commandment, even though two more follow. Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 95–97.

[85] Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 295r–296v.

"You shall not desire someone else's wife, housewife or bedfellow"[86] as a reminder of the fact that it is not only a lawful marriage that establishes a man's possession of a woman. Also, the habit of the partners to share the bed establishes the possession of the man, as well as his decision to do so. The right of penetration also includes a general right of possession, which in its turn creates responsibility and respect for the possessions of others, as the various explanations of the Ninth Commandment often state. To particularly indicate the prohibition of desire for someone else's wife is allegedly based on the high value a wife has for her husband—*dat alderdurbareste gud*.[87] The language connected to romantic love in modern ears—a woman is a man's dearest good—refers in this context to a relation of owner and owned, with an entire legal context supporting it.

The explanation of the Decalogue produced in Lübeck in 1480, a Middle Low German original, fits the husband-wife opposition into its general focus on questions of obedience and commitment, and here the combination of several oppositions to legitimize and reinforce the hierarchical implication is again fully deployed. The need for obedience to God and the fulfilment of the covenant is the basic structuring element within which all other oppositions receive order and meaning. The relationship of master and slave is occasionally used as an example, but more often and more extensively that between husband and wife is used for all kinds of commitment and subordination. Marriage is also compared with the binding of the monk to his abbot, thus referencing another dichotomy based on a relationship of obedience that is freely entered into.[88]

The opposition between husband and wife not only expresses a normative view of marriage, but also of the social order in general. It is shaped by biblical marital metaphors, which favor a concept of marriage as a relationship between two unequal poles: if it works and the hierarchical order is respected, love is the supportive power, but if the order is disturbed, violence must be used in order to reestablish dominance and subordination. The mutual rights and duties of which marital advice reminds the partners represents marriage also as an image of feudal society.

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[86] "Du scalt nicht begeren enes anderen wyff, hußvruwen edder bedegenoten." Ibid., fol. 295r.

[87] "Got nomet besundergen de vrouwe darumme, dat he sik so vele vlitigher ware vor ere begheringe. Hijrumme wente de vruwe is dat alder durbareste gut, dat de mynsche hefft na siner sele." Bokeken van deme repe, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 165.

[88] Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 280r–280v.

The husband—the lord—is supposed to punish the wife—the servant—to control her economically and to adhere to the law regarding their relationship. The wife is supposed to love, respect and obey, to work in keeping with her position and generally to fulfil her duties. Marital metaphors thereby recur, with the relationship between husband and wife not one of complementary but of contrary poles in a hierarchy. These metaphors, which are often used with no explanation or greater context provided, rarely dominate a text, and thereby can be seen as part of the inventory of social imagery that can be engaged and used en passant—and this is not only possible because of the abundance of marital advice available both in learned and vernacular discourses, but also because the marital binomial receives meaning from its interaction with other binomials centered on authority.

V.5 *Lords and Servants*

The dialectical relationship between the two poles of a binomial focuses on mutuality of rights and duties, but also on the inequality of the two poles. This was the case for the husband-wife binomial, and it is also the case for an opposition central to feudal society: "lords and servants" or "free and unfree", where the dominance of nobility and clergy are justified by mutuality, as explained by functional tripartition and its definition of work and functionality. According to Bourdieu's study on social distinctions, it is normal for the social elites to divide themselves into two functionally differentiated groups ("intellectuals and employers", for example, or "clergy and nobility") and to separate these from the undifferentiated third and inferior group.[89] In this model, the division of the elite into two groups is only relevant for the elite itself—but social differentiation in Middle Low German lay didactical literature is not shaped by the elite's need to differentiate itself, but meant as a means of educating the subordinates and teaching them their place. The tripartite image is reduced to a basic opposition between lords and servants,[90] which profits from its connection to the gendered oppositions (man-woman, husband-wife). The lack of differentiation of the elite might indicate the shift from a clerical perspective to a lay perspective, which tends to level the differences

[89] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 472.

[90] These shifts are occasionally already observed by the Early Middle Ages. Cf. Struve. "Pedes," 9.

between the dominant sections of society, which in return, according to Bourdieu, tend to standardize the subordinate sections.

The division into "lord" and "servant" is much more prominent in Middle Low German archives than the male-female opposition, which suggests a greater importance of factors of functionality and class than of gender for determining membership in an order. At the same time, the gender order serves as a basis for the assignment of hierarchies in other oppositions, such as the lord-servant opposition. This usually occurs in connection with general questions of authority and, in a way that calls to mind functional tripartition and its vision of feudal society, places a strong emphasis on mutuality. This applies to translated bestsellers and Middle Low German originals alike.

Brother Berthold's canon law collection, a translated bestseller, is very preoccupied with the mutual responsibilities of the orders, but even here the clergy's special position is replaced by a general emphasis on existing authority. Many chapters deal with the rights and duties of *lehen mannen* [vassals] who should obey and work for their masters and, as a reward, will receive protection and, in some cases, forgiveness for their sins as they cannot be held responsible for following orders. In a like manner, a number of chapters deal with the duties the lords and masters have towards their peasants and vassals. The legitimacy of the ruler's power is biblical in nature and encompasses both noblemen and clergy:

> Herschop unde alle ghewalt is van gode gheordent in deme hemmele under den engelen unde in der hellen mank den duuelen de bouen syk prelaten hebben, unde ok under den luden alse de pawest, biscop, keyser, konynge, hertogen, vorsten, unde heren, unde ander gheweldigen. Ok is sulke herscop gewesen in der olden ee, de gud suluen settede konynge unde heren, alse Moyses Josue Saul Dauid unde ander vele, unde in der nyen ee do Christus gesettet hefft den pawest unde biscoppe ouer de lude.[91]
>
> [Authority and all power are ordained by God in the heavens among the angels and in hell among the devils, who have prelates above them, and among the people, as the pope, bishop, emperor, kings, dukes, princes, lords, or another of the mighty. The same kind of authority is to be found in the Old Testament, where God himself put kings and lords in power, for example, Moses, Joshua, Saul, David and many others, and in the New Testament, where Christ placed the pope and the bishops above the people.]

The paragraph continues with the metaphor of the two swords representing secular and ecclesiastical power on earth, a metaphor otherwise

[91] Summa to dude, letter H, chapter 8.

surprisingly underrepresented in Middle Low German literature. This is probably the result of the lack of attention the texts generally pay to the distinction between the two powers: rulers are usually both secular and ecclesiastical, lords and prelates, whether this is clarified or simply understood from the context. Authority in general is more important than who exerts this authority—a typical perspective from below that also appears in the German canon law *summa*, not because canon law does not recognize a distinction between ecclesiastical and secular power, but because the German version had consciously been reworked for lay use. This perspective from below regarding different powers remains true for the many chapters on *herschop*.

The duties that lords possess are mainly those regarding protection and mutual loyalty. However, compared to the duties of the vassals, those of the lords are not further developed. Numerous rules are expressed with the opposition *de heren—sine lude* or similar ones.[92] Lords are permitted to collect tithes and taxes from their vassals, but only under certain circumstances, and they are not allowed to take more tithes or taxes than the old law or custom permits.[93] While vassals are required to be obedient, lords—the same applies to prelates—are explicitly forbidden from displaying humility towards vassals.[94] The servants are not further differentiated and are basically classified by their duty to obey, something that applies to almost everybody who is required to obey someone else. Instead of focusing on a more developed description of one of the groups, the lord-servant opposition defines both in relation to the other, thereby placing the focus on subordination.

Society as represented in the canon law collection is comprised of two orders: those occupying the superior level and those beneath them. The third group, the clerics, are hidden within this distinction, although they can be subsumed into both those who are allowed to collect tithes and taxes and those who are not permitted to show humbleness towards their

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[92] "Wo sik de here scal holden iegen sine denere. ix. Heren schullen ôre knechte unde denere se sint belenet edder nicht beschermen unde den scal he truwe syn unde sinem gesinde to dem lyve unde to dem gude unde tho den eren in aller wyse alse de de knecht is getruwe unde leue schuldich dem heren also is ok wedder de here dem knechte. Unde dar van les an dem bôkstave B van den beleneden knechten." Summa to dude, letter H, chapter 9.

[93] "Wo de heren mogen nemen van oren luden tyns, x [...] Wen de heren stur, schat unde gel nemen mogen bouen de olden wonheit, xi [...] Wen de heren van den luden mogen nemen so vele alse se willen, xij." Ibid., chapter 10–12.

[94] "Wo sik ein ouerste unde ein prelate nicht to vele scule othmodigen iegen syne undersaten." Summa to dude, letter D, chapter 7.

subordinates—they are not mentioned as a group separate from rulers in general, however. The implicit meaning of the trifunctional scheme, which assigns the clergy a rank above the nobility and thereby a specific form of authority and a specific position within the two powers, is lost in the lord-servant opposition, even though it does not deny the clergy a ruling position.

The lord-servant opposition uses the terminology of the feudal order, but it gives it a different concept of ruling. It is not the nobility that occupies a superior rank, but all forms of authority, noble, clerical or otherwise. The potentially broad range of these other authorities is described in the context of the urban sphere of life; for example, in explanations of the Decalogue. *Deenste hebben*, to occupy an office, is presented as the main dividing line.

> Die ampte ende deenste hebben offte verwaren in lande off yn steden, sie syn heren of raetlůde, ridders of knechte, borghermeesters of schepen, off van erre weghen ghesat als heren, rentmeesters, tolleners, tzijsemesters, boetmesters, stadboeden [...][95]
>
> [Those who hold offices or have duties in the countryside or in the towns, be they lords or counselors, knights or esquires, mayors or lay judges, or honorably established as lords, pensioners, toll keepers, town messengers ...]

This example derives from an explanation of the Seventh Commandment, and the list of professions includes those for whom theft is considered especially shameful due to their position of power—stealing is considered more wicked if the thief abuses his professional position for the deed. This reveals a very far-reaching concept of positions of power: not only is the nobility not a class of its own in this case, but it is mentioned alongside all of the urban administrative duties. The important thing is not noble heritage or the possibility of exercising power but, in a further step, merely the possession of a duty that might create the possibility of abuse. This is but one example of the parallel identification of noble and burgher functionaries in the context of their access to power. The lord in the lord-servant opposition can be read either as an actual landlord, a noble, a duke or a king, but a broader reading of both lords and servants along with the dividing lines established in urban society is more obvious. These by extension resemble the distinction found in urban legal texts between "the council" and "the others," which also adheres to a basic dividing line

[95] Zehn Gebote/Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet, fol. 9r.

between "authority" and "subjugation"—the examples of an exegesis of this broader reading of the binomial, with regard to the Seventh Commandment, for example, are rare. In general, who is a lord and who is not seems to be so obvious as to require no explanation.

Besides, for the legitimization of authority in the urban sphere, the lord-servant opposition can also be extended to the relation between God and humans. A rare case of the explicit use of feudal terminology in this context is the explanation of the Decalogue, produced in Leipzig in Marcus Brandis' printing office in 1484.[96] It is also very interesting regarding the connection between social oppositions and the order of virtues, since it closely connects the good-evil opposition with the lord-servant opposition.

The incunabulum is made up of five sections in the framework of a sermon: a clarification of the lord-servant opposition (fol. 1v–6r); an exegesis of Mt 7:16 about the joy of the saved (*de guden*) and the sorrow of the condemned (*de sunder*) (6v–8v); general didactical sentences (8v–10r); a consolatory prayer (*Eyn trost den bedroueden*) (10v–13r); and finally an explanation of the Decalogue (13r–15r).

Both the first and the last sections of the text make extensive use of the lord-servant opposition and intertwine the spiritual and the secular hierarchies. The opposition is also the basis for a sophisticated exegesis of servitude as a metaphor for the *conditio humana*: this is where the full potential of the binomial unfolds. The first section, with the initium *Alle mynschen syn gemakede unde gekoffte unde gemededе knechte* [all humans are made and bought and hired servants], lists five aspects of servitude. Human beings are said to be naturally created as servants of the Lord: if they do not obey, hunger and plagues will be the result of their revolt against nature. Human beings are purchased as servants, not with money but with the blood of Christ, and yet they still refuse to serve and to be humble. Human beings are hired servants, with their payment being eternal salvation, and still they want to be better paid. Those who think that they are born free are terribly mistaken. The difference between lord and servant lies in free will:

[96] Die zehn Gebote [Low German] In dusser materien synt de teyn gebode godes vorclaret in eyneme sermone des groten lerers Heremite. [Leipzig: Marcus Brandis, about 1484]. BC 356, GW 10573.

> Eyn knecht de syk holt vor eynen deener dencket selden wat he doen wyl, sunder wat he doen schulde, wedder umme eyn here unde fry Juncker gedencket wat he doen wyl.[97]
>
> [A servant, who thinks himself to be a servant, rarely thinks about what he wants to do, but what he is supposed to do, while a lord and free squire thinks about what he wants to do.]

This means in a figurative reading of the metaphor that humans should think about God's will and live accordingly, while only God Himself is allowed to think and do what he wants. At the same time, the metaphor provides legitimacy to those born free on earth—even though they are equally unfree in relation to God, they are freer in their relationships in the world. In its figurative meaning, the opposition also includes a literal meaning regarding secular power.

Other aspects of the feudal relationship are applied to the God-human relationship as well, and it is not entirely clear whether it is the source domain (feudal allegiance) or the target domain (God and humans) that directs the metaphor and determines the chosen points of similarity: the servant constantly stands in great debt to the Lord and must think about the day when he will have to give account. The servant must be aware that he cannot be the heir of the lord. The servant does not own any goods, and therefore does not need to worry about losing his possessions. The last aspect mentioned is the willingness of the servant to serve others besides his Lord; in the literal reading of the metaphor, to serve ecclesiastical powers, and in the figurative reading, to serve other humans in general. Obviously the general hierarchical concept implies the possibility of other hierarchies at each level—all humans are servants, but some are more completely servants than others. This leaves open to question whether secular lords are servants as well, and whether clerics are lords or servants, but these inconsistencies are not addressed.

The fourth section of the incunabulum, the explanation of the Decalogue, takes up the lord-servant binomial again and applies it to each Commandment. The First Commandment is said to mean that your master does not want you to mock him (*dyn juncker wyl nicht, dattu eme spottest*); the Second that you must serve your master on certain days (*dynen junkeren moystu welke dage houe deinsten*); the Third that "Your master does not want you to kill any of his other servants" (*Dyn leen juncker stadet dik nycht, dattu sener anderen undersaten welken dodest*) and

[97] Zehn Gebote/In dusser materien, fol. 3r.

so on.[98] The metaphor encompasses all of the Commandments. Each one begins with the *Din leen Junker stadet dik ok nicht*, followed by the Commandment, which states that God does not want you to do this or that: *So vorbud God*.

The term *leen Juncker* explicitly means the lord, landlord or sovereign in a feudal society, thereby bestowing upon this secular relation the same significance and immunity as is the case in the relationship between humans and God. The explanation of the Decalogue leaves the level of a metaphor, however, and turns the lord-servant binomial into a complete parable, with the symbolic narrative being followed by an explanation. Why this would be necessary in the case of the Decalogue, but not for the more abstract metaphorical opening section of the incunabulum—where an explanation of the metaphor is totally lacking and the figurative and literal meanings are always evident—is not obvious. It probably indicates a greater respect for Scripture and a wish to reproduce it as closely as possible, with the metaphorical level constituting an additional feature. It is probably even a reaction to the inconsistencies of the lord-servant opposition as explained in the first section of the book, where the God-human relationship and human-human relationship are intermingled, raising some potentially disturbing questions. The feudal order, although constituting a prominent feature for organizing texts, is not considered an entirely self-explanatory metaphor for the relationship between God and humans, and is probably even less obvious in an urban context. The explanation of the Decalogue, ascribed to St. Jerome and printed in Leipzig, is an original example of the far-reaching use of the lord-servant binomial as a metaphor—given the situation the text faces in an urban context, the literal reading of the metaphor disappears in favor of the figurative reading, the God-human relationship. Nonetheless, it is apparent that feudal power relations are valid for the process of creating meaning, since the implications of the lord-servant binomial regarding mutual duties and the nature of typical interactions (giving account, liege services, etc.) seem to be universally understood and useful as the source domain.

The catechism ascribed to St. Jerome uses a sermon with a central motif of "lord and servant" to frame the explanation of the Decalogue. This opposition is also prominent in the explanations of the Fourth Commandment in other catechetical texts, where the figurative reading of "lord and servant" as a metaphor fades and the literal reading of the

[98] Ibid., fol. 16v.

binomial gains significance: the exegeses of the Fourth Commandment explain it either as a rule governing family relations or a general rule for society—this will be discussed in detail below in the section on the opposition between "clergy" and "laity". In the fifteenth century, the duty to honor one's parents was augmented by the duty to honor one's spiritual parents, interpreted as persons providing spiritual guidance, especially confessors, but also secular authorities.[99] *Nicht alleine toe natuerlikem olderen, meer oec toe geestliken ende wertliken heren* [not solely in the case of biological parents, but even more so in the case of spiritual and secular rulers],[100] obedience is obligatory, and this points to a potential connection of the lord-servant opposition to paternal or, more to the point, patriarchal imagery. The biological parents become similar or are even bypassed in importance by spiritual and secular rulers: parental and feudal imagery merge.

Additionally, the explanations of this Commandment show the transition between feudal and urban power relations, all still under the aegis of the lord-servant opposition. In a catechism from Cologne, landlords and city councils are mentioned as being in equal possession of the godly right to testify and to establish rules, and uprisings against either landlords or city governments are defined as violations of the Fourth Commandment.[101] Once more, authority in general is in focus here, with no distinction made between different kinds of authority. In particular, the nobility as a distinct group seems to have declined in importance when it comes to the definition of authority.

While all these examples use the boundary between lord and servant in order to remind the servant of his duties, the opposite is also possible: among the pious sins in the handbooks for confession are two related to circumstances in which rulers are not hard enough on their subordinates. In contrast to most other lists of sins, they are not made up of things that someone might do, but rather of things that one might omit or fail to do in a sufficient way—pious things not done, so to speak. Generally, the socially superior groups have more options for either sins of commission or omission than do the poor and powerless, and thus the frequent

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[99] A general apology of this extension is for example made by Nicolaus of Dinkelsbühl in his explanation of the Decalogue popular in the south. Cf. Störmer-Caysa, Uta. *Gewissen und Buch: Über den Weg eines Begriffes in die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998, 380–381.

[100] Zehn Gebote/Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet, fol. 5v.

[101] "Die der landes heeren ende stede guede ende gotlike recht of besaete versmaen. Die parthye, uploepe offte ander verdreet verwerken ende maeken tegen ere heren off steede effte verraderie." Zehn Gebote/Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet, fol. 6r–6v.

mention of the powerful among potential sinners comes as no surprise. But not all of the catechetical books that include lists of pious sins are quite so obvious in assigning the sins to a certain group of people as is the *Bedebok* from 1484. Usually the seventh to the ninth of the pious sins address a failure to punish the sins of others, to prevent sins and to report the sins of others to the prelates.[102] The *Bedebok* makes clear that rulers in general constitute the group of people particularly in danger of committing this kind of sin. Number seven of the pious sins in this text is:

> Dede herschop hebben vnde straffen ere vndersaten nicht vmme ere myssedaet [...] wor vmmee straffet dy dyn geystlike richter, als dyn bichtvader swårliken, na dyneme vordeenste, dar schalt du ane betheren. Wen te he mŏt dat dŏn, also du vth disse vorscreuen worden wol vorstaen hest.[103]
>
> [Those who have authority and do not punish their subordinates for their misdeeds ... hence your spiritual judge, that is, your confessor, punishes you heavily for them, based on your merit, so that you will improve. He does so because he has to do this, as you should have understood from these words before.]

The explanation for this is derived from the biblical story of Eli (1 Sm 4:12–18), who had been the judge over Israel for forty years, until the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant during his reign and he died of shame and in sorrow. This indicates that the understanding of *herschop hebben* includes not only authority and governance, and thereby kings and noble rulers, but also judges, who in an urban context were usually laypeople. But the notion of a sacred union between king and judge, as it is framed in the Old Testament and widely used in medieval political theory, remains valid and can serve to underpin an understanding of the opposition between lords and servants. Just as Eli was punished for his failure to properly judge the people of Israel, lords, rulers and judges will be likewise punished for the same oversight. Ecclesiastical authorities are counted among the judges, and a confessor who fails to adequately punish a penitent will himself be punished. As is the case for the male-female opposition, other oppositions with obvious hierarchical content are linked to the first one—the judge-subordinate opposition. The *Bedebok* continues:

> Int viij. Wen de prelaten vnde vorweser mit weldigher hant nicht en straffen, de vndersaten, wen de worde alleyne nicht helpen willen. Ezechielis in deme

[102] For example in De iegher, fol. 19v.
[103] Bedebok, Lübeck about 1484, fol. 213v–214r.

> xiij. cap.[104] Dar vmme werden vaken de houede vordomet, vmme der sunde wyllen der vndersaten, vnde de olderen vmme der kyndere wyllen, vnde de huszherren vmme der boden willen.[105]
>
> [The eighth. If the prelates and administrators do not punish subordinates with a heavy hand, in cases where words alone do not help. Ezekiel in the thirteenth chapter. Because of this, the heads are often doomed for the sins of the subordinates, and the parents are doomed for the sake of the children, and the heads of households for the sake of the servants.]

Prelate-subordinate is the first binomial, and it establishes this hierarchical order, followed by superiors and subordinates or, more specifically, parents and children and heads of households and their employees. The chain of connected oppositions makes the respective superior poles the responsible parties: the inferior pole bears no responsibility. Differences between the superior poles of the opposition—prelates, administrators, parents, heads of households—are neglected in the face of the significance of the overall distinction between superior and inferior and the common duty shared by all those in positions of authority—to punish heavily.

The same reasoning is also employed when it comes to the connection between the lord-servant binomial and the free-unfree binomial, which can among others be used to remind Christians of their "duty" to treat Jews badly and to ultimately prevent them from living among Christians. Johannes Pfefferkorn states:

> Ir tut auch in solichen den juden keinen gewalt dan sie sein nit frei, sunder eygen mit leib vnd guth vnd dar zu als offenbar viante desz cristen glawbs auch der cristen durch handel als vorberoert ist. So doende syt ir ritter cristi.[106]
>
> [You are not violating the Jews (if you treat them like heretics), because they are not free, but owned with their bodies and their goods, and additionally they are obvious enemies of the Christian faith and of the Christians because of (their involvement in) trading, as I have said before. If you do so, you are knights of Christ.]

Every Christian can be a lord or knight if he fulfils his Christian duty to punish and violate Jews, who in any case are not free in comparison to

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[104] Unclear reference. Ezekiel 13 deals with false prophets of both the male and female gender and their flaws.

[105] Bedebok, Lübeck about 1484, fol. 214r. The same opposition between authority and subordinates can be expressed more implicitly by mentioning only the misdeeds one can commit against one's servants such as paying too small a salary based on bad advice from others among the mighty.

[106] Johannes Pfefferkorn, Ich heyß eyn buchlijn der iuden beicht, fol. 2v.

the Christians. Even though Johannes Pfefferkorn's pamphlets include an unusual number of intertwined anti-Jewish resentments, his use of the parallel Christian-Jew and free-unfree oppositions is exemplary and points to the potential for the lord-servant opposition to provide other oppositions with both meaning and a suitable hierarchy.

There is one preferred model for hierarchies and power relations, and it does not distinguish between a single ruler and a ruling group, nor does it make any distinction regarding the form of power exercised. The functional tripartition focuses on the differentiation of the elites, while distinctions between the subordinates are neglected, so in this case a change of perspective is visible in a change in the imagery used, imagery that neglects distinctions between the rulers. Lay didactical literature draws its imagery related to the lord-servant binomial from the Bible, preferably from the Old Testament, or from feudal society, with both of them representing various social forms and types of governance, but neither bearing any similarity to the situation in late medieval urban societies, with their stratifications based on profession, wealth, family and gender. Of all of the potential metaphors and imageries available in the Bible, the one most commonly used to express power and authority relations is the basic lord-servant opposition. On the basis of the distinction between God and his people, a concept of authority that has a single person on top and ignores distinctions at the lower level is established. God the Father, as an entirely distinct being, becomes the model for all the other oppositions, because the Bible remains a clearly comprehensible text that readily provides points of reference, even though the society it is applied to differs considerably from the one that is described in biblical imagery.

V.6 *Clergy and Laity*

Oppositions and binomials are rhetorical forms that rarely serve to structure an entire text. Catechetical advice, however, always addresses the relationship between the lay penitent and the clerical confessor, and thus the opposition between clergy and laity is already inscribed in the genre, and sometimes also in the nature of the text itself, i.e. in its dialogical structure.[107] It can take the form of a dialogue between master and

[107] Buck, Günther. "Das Lehrgespräch." In *Das Gespräch*. Ed. by Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning, 191–211. München: Fink, 1996; Kästner, Hannes. *Mittelalterliche*

student—as in *Speygel der Leyen* and *Lucidarius*—or it can be used en passant, when parts of the text directly address the reader, from confessor to penitent. Consequently, *preste vnde leyen* [priests and laypeople] is, like lord and servant, a very popular binomial, looking back on a long tradition and weighed down with hierarchical implementations and privileges. But the frequent use of the binomial does not automatically mean that it articulates an exclusively clerical ideology: the relationship is more complicated than that, and the general redefinition of the relationship between clergy and laity found in lay didactical literature is particularly prominent in these examples.

Canon law establishes the distinction between the clerical order and the order of laypeople, for example the dictum *Duo sunt genera Christianorum*, attributed to St. Jerome in the *Decretum Gratiani*.[108] This distinction was, not surprisingly, most often adopted and developed in detail by canon lawyers and commentators.[109] The differentiation into "clergy" and "laity" is—despite the oft-stated inaccuracy of the categories in relation to medieval social realities[110]—one of the most basic ways of ordering society and was used throughout the Middle Ages in canon law, in theology and in pragmatic texts most often as a means of supporting clerical privileges, but also in an anticlerical context. It had been in use since the fourth century, when the clergy's privileges and the distinction between secular and canon law were established. Originally, this distinction opened the way for various differentiations of orders among the clergy, a basic one being between clerics and monks, with more sophisticated ones including different clerical ordinations or different types of monks and canons.[111]

Similar to distinctions between "lord" and "servant", the distinction between "clergy" and "laity" can potentially be extended to provide further differentiation within the superior pole of the opposition, that of the clergy, but this potential is rarely used in lay didactical literature: just as is the case for the lord-servant opposition, the perspective from below, one which does not take distinctions between rulers into consideration, proves relevant. The difference is that the clergy-laity opposition did not at the outset focus on authority but on the administration of the sacraments

Lehrgespräche: Textlinguistische Analysen, Studien zur poetischen Funktion und pädagogischen Intention. Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1978.

108 *CIC 1, Decretum magistri Gratiani*. Decretum CXII, q. 1, c. 7, col. 678.

109 Examples Ivo of Chartres and Stephen of Tournai in Constable, *Three Studies*, 295.

110 Burger, "Direkte Zuwendung," 87–91.

111 Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 25–26.

and, as such, constitutes a very specific and crucial Christian form of functional distinction. Furthermore, LeGoff et al. list "le cas du clergé" as an exceptional example in their list of factors that determine membership in a particular class: the clergy formed a group of its own, which in contrast to the nobility, for example, was not entirely determined by any of the factors that otherwise determined class membership (birth, good fortune, mind-set, functionality). People were, at least theoretically, not born into the clergy, nor were their memberships determined by any other hereditary factor, even though in practice most clerics either came from well-off families or profited from the nepotism of promoting family members for clerical careers. On the ideological level, however, none of these factors were pertinent: entrance into the clergy was supposed to result from a calling alone. LeGoff et al. also raise the question of whether the clergy had the highest position within the class system or if it constituted something apart and, as such, outside of the general class order.[112]

Jean Batanyi classifies the clergy-laity distinction as an opposition with an absolute character, allowing for a definite social categorization in comparison to those oppositions that are characterized by a more fluent transition between the categories.[113] In late medieval lay didactical literature, however, a different approach is apparent, a subtle shift in the clergy-laity distinction from an absolute distinction into a fluent transition. This transition culminated in the Reformation, but its origins were already visible on a semantic level in earlier didactical literature. Originally conceived of as an opposition composed of complementaries where one excludes the other, several texts use the clergy-laity distinction as antonyms, with a smooth transition being imaginable.

The distinction between clergy and laity is not directly addressed or attacked in lay didactical literature, but there are a number of rhetorical strategies that point to a general reconsideration and reevaluation of the hierarchy between the two groups. These strategies are visible on different levels; first, the number of texts using the clergy-laity opposition (i.e. treatises on monastic life, catechetical books or educational dialogues); second, the concrete distinctions made in these texts in order

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[112] Batany, Jean, Philippe Contamine, Bernard Guénée, and Jacques LeGoff. "Plan pour l'étude historique du vocabulaire social de l'Occident médiéval." In *Ordres et classes: Colloque d'histoire sociale.* Ed. by Daniel Roche and Ernest Labrousse, 87–92. Paris: Mouton, 1973, ibid., 90–91.

[113] Batany, Jean. "Le vocabulaire des catégories sociales chez quelques moralistes français vers 1200." In *Ordres et classes*, 59–72, ibid., 65ff.

to separate the groups or orders. This second level in particular makes a general investigation of the terminology used for the clergy and the laity necessary. The polysemy of the term *orden* in Middle Low German, which mirrors the polysemy of the Latin term *ordo*, is particularly relevant when dealing with this opposition.[114]

The traditional distinctions between clergy and laity are based on the ordination of priests, vows of celibacy and reclusion and the extent of religious knowledge: the latter point marks a shift in didactical literature from an emphasis on the superiority of the clergy to one focused on an equal claim shared by all Christians. Basic knowledge about religious matters as a precondition for faith was not restricted to priests, as is stated in an explanation of the Decalogue printed in Magdeburg:

> Hyr mochtestu nu yeghen seggen unde sprecken aldus. Ick byn een leye / wat weeth ick dar van wat ick louen schal / daer segge yck dy aldus vpp / dat een yewelyck cristene mynsche plichtych is tho louende de articule des cristenen gelouen.[115]
>
> [Here you might want to object and say: I am a layman, what do I know about what I am supposed to believe. But to this I answer you: every Christian is obliged to believe the articles of the Christian creed.]

The focus is on "all Christians," rather than on the distinction between clergy and laity. Knowledge, at least basic knowledge, one of the key factors traditionally asserted to support the superiority of the clergy is here established as a requirement for all Christians. The desire to spread religious knowledge, and to thereby spiritually edify and ensure the salvation of the laity, ultimately leads to a diminished importance for those who develop and transcribe this knowledge, and who had for a long time used this role to legitimize their privileges. Even in those texts in which a cleric, fully conscious of his superior position in the hierarchy, writes to the laity, the deficiency and ultimately the redundancy of the clergy is advanced.[116]

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[114] Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 47, also gathers evidence of this from the other German vernaculars, with a focus on the connection between *orden* and *regula*.

[115] Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 278r.

[116] See, for example, the introduction to Dietrich Coelde van Munster's *Kerstenspiegel*, where he repeatedly points to the possibility of the laity educating themselves: "Hyr beginnet ein schon spegel der cristen mynschen, welkeren eyn yewelk cristen minsche gerne schal by syk dregen vor ein hantbôkeken, wente hyr inne beslaten is allent dat dar not is to weten to der selen salicheyt, tosamende ghesocht vt velen hilghen schriften der lerers, to profite vnde salicheit aller minschen, vnde vnseme leuen heren to laue vnde marien syner leuen moder. De iene de dyt ghemaket heft biddet alle minschen dat se dat vaken euerlesen willen, vnde syk willen dar na regeren, ock dat den anderen simpelen vnweten

This tendency is not specific to a particular discourse in the Middle Low German incunabula and early printed texts, but appears both in translated bestsellers and in originals, whether they are identified with specific clerical authors or are the work of anonymous compilators.

Probably the total absence of the metaphor of "milk, not solid food" (1 Cor 3:2) plays a role in this context—it had been used by many theologians (Guibert of Nogent, Petrus Comestor, Alanus ab Insulis) to describe the different levels of religious education expected of laypeople and religious people, not in terms of different content, but in terms of different levels of intricacy.[117] Middle Low German didactical literature makes no use of this metaphor in texts directed to a lay public. It is likely that the inherent arrogance of the teaching clergy meant that it was not seen as appropriate. Alternatively, it is possible that the metaphor simply never made its way from learned discourse about laypeople into the didactical discourse addressing laypeople. The only mention of the milk and solid food metaphor occurs in a text that, despite being written in the vernacular, was meant for male monastic communities—the *De pacientia libellus*, printed in Cologne in 1510. The author admonishes readers to follow the perfect people in striving for salvation and adds: *Schame dich dattu noch der milch behoues unde geyner harden spysen* [be ashamed of still needing milk rather than solid food].[118] There is no reference to the Bible so a basic knowledge of the quotation can be assumed, at least in a monastic context. It is not, however, to be found as a guiding metaphor in lay didactical literature. This might be related to the authority generally assigned to books about religious matters—if a book has the power to lead a soul to salvation, then its description as milk rather than solid food would diminish its importance.[119] However, potential differences in the forms of knowledge of the clergy and the laity are not discussed—which does not mean that they play no role in the didactical purpose and its limitations.

The Middle Low German original *Speygel der Leyen* is an exemplary text that addresses the relationship between the clergy and the laity. The text is organized as a dialogue between a master and a disciple. Most of

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luden de nicht lesen konen des hilgen daghes vorlezen willen, wen se doch leddich sitten vp der straten, dar vor se grote pine liden mothen. Ock biddet he dat de olderen ere kinder dat lesen leren." Kerstenspiegel, Rostock 1507, fol. 1v.

[117] Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 93–95.

[118] De pacientia libellus, fol. 10r.

[119] Cf. chapter I.4 above on "Names and Metaphors."

the questions concern matters of spiritual and catechetical knowledge, so it can be assumed that the master is understood to be a monk or a cleric, and it is taken for granted that the disciple is a layperson, rather than someone who aspires to a monastic or clerical career: there is nothing that hints at the disciple's potential advance into a clerical order, but several examples of laypeople being directly addressed. The hierarchy between these two is part of the dialogic situation—at the same time, the dialogue is rudimentary, and the student's questions are very brief, with little potential to influence the course of the conversation. These late examples of the once very important literary form of the educational dialogue have been characterized as little more than reflections of the reading customs of the audience meant to encourage the reader to identify with the student—not a traditional form of expressing heavenly authority and worldly subordination, as was the intent in earlier pedagogical dialogues.[120]

The boundary between master and disciple is clear and reflects the established limits for religious study on the part of laypeople in general—this calls to mind the assumption of literary scholars that literary dialogues are culturally specific responses to certain social problems,[121] in this case the clergy-laity opposition as expressed in the necessarily hierarchical educational dialogue. The master interrupts his explanations several times because, as he says, the secrets of belief are too difficult to understand and need not be explained in detail—implicitly this means they need not be explained to a layperson. Repeatedly, the superior partner in the dialogue reminds the representative of the inferior pole of his inadequacy and his insufficient grasp of the knowledge that is being transmitted: *Dar en schaltu dy sunderlyken nicht mede bekummeren* [this is something you should not worry about] is a frequent statement.[122] The general intent of *Speygel der Leyen* is to present basic religious knowledge as a requirement for the salvation of laypeople: the episcopal efforts to constrain the spread of religious knowledge in the vernacular play no role in this text.[123]

Without being explicit, the clergy-laity opposition is contained in the dialogic situation. The issue is addressed in the text itself with the term *orden* and the way it is explained by the master playing a crucial role. The

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120 Enders, Markus. "Von der Wahrheits- zur Weisheitssuche im Dialog: Anmerkungen zur Entwicklung der Form des Dialogs im Werk Heinrich Seuses." In Jacobi, ed. *Gespräche lesen*, 359–378, ibid., 376.

121 Fritz, Gerd. "Geschichte von Dialogformen." In Fritz/Hundsnurscher, eds. *Handbuch der Dialoganalyse*, 545–562, ibid., 545.

122 Speygel der Leyen, fol. 24r.

123 Schreiner, "Grenzen," 7.

term is used throughout *Speygel der Leyen* to mean different things and is qualified by different adjectives: there is the Christian order, which every Christian belongs to,[124] and there are the ecclesiastical orders (*geystliken orden*), which exist within Christianity or among the Christian people (*in der christenheyt, manckt deme cristene volke*).[125] There is no distinction made between the clergy and monks or among different grades of ordination in the text, so it would seem that this semantic dimension of *orden* has, in this case, been lost. While the structure of the entire text presents the hierarchical relationship between clergy and laity, much of the concrete dialogue serves to minimize the difference between the two—for example, the answer to the question posed by the disciple about the clerical orders.

> De ordene syn anghesat van etliken hilghen vaderen, so se syn vnderwyset van gode, vnde dyt darvmme dath alle de de syk geuen in de ordene scholen voren ein vullenkomen gheystlik leuent. Vnde merke, dat alle cristene minschen syn darto vorplichtiget. Alzus is eyn islik cristen minsche plichtich to holden de ghebode godes, vnde dat darby, so vor ghesecht is. Men darvmme dat de geistliken nu meer willen doen, wen so en is geboden, so gan se in de geistlicheit.[126]
>
> [The orders are installed by several Holy Fathers, as God has taught them to, so that all those who enter an order shall lead a perfect spiritual life. And note that all Christians are obliged to do so. Thus every Christian is obliged to keep the laws of God, as well as what has been previously said (praying every day, attending mass, confession). But as spiritual people want to do more than they are obliged to, they enter the clergy.]

The differentiation into clergy and laity indicates nothing more than a decision in favor of a different level of perfection. What is essentially important is the general striving to adhere to God's laws, which will in itself lead to salvation. People in monasteries are only doing more than they are obliged to—this is a far cry from the definition of monastic life as the only route to salvation.

Also in this context, the aspect of a reevaluation or adjustment of the privileges of the clergy comes from the focus on "all Christians," who should live as virtuously and as obediently as the members of clerical

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[124] "Vnse salicheyt vnde vnsen cristliken orden vnde vnsen louen," Speygel der Leyen, fol. 2r.

[125] Ibid., fol. 46r.

[126] Ibid., fol. 41r.

orders. Clearly stated, the attempt to lead a perfect life is required of all Christians, while the clergy only strive to do something more. The term *ordene* obviously means both the clerical orders and the general social order, as determined by God's laws. *Speygel der Leyen* describes a concept of the social order that does not divide it into different social strata, but sees in it specific duties for all Christians. Chapter 33 deals with "the order of the Christians, first and foremost, the Pater Noster."[127] The chapter's introduction explains the *cristliken orden* as a tripartite commitment: first, to keep the Christian creed in words and actions; second, to know and keep the Decalogue; third, to avoid the seven mortal sins. The *cristlike orden* thereby means a commitment to living according to the contemporary canon of catechetical texts, a concept rather similar to *regula*, a rule for a certain order; however, in this case it is equally relevant for all Christians.

The presentation of the clerical lifestyle as voluntary and unnecessary for salvation, the lack of distinction between secular clergy and monks and finally the polysemy of the term *orden* point to an overall semantic concept of the clergy-laity opposition in which the absolute distinction between the orders is not central, even if the principal hierarchy is still intact.

The project of improving the laity's spiritual development not only leads to an increasing number of concrete attempts to diminish the stringency of the boundary between clergy and laity, but also to a redefinition of lay privileges and positions. Even in texts lacking a distinct anti-clerical intent, the laity may be depicted as the bearers of spiritual and, above all, virtuous hope. The argument against laypeople's access to clerical offices, their lack of knowledge, is turned into an advantage:

> De eenvoldighen simplen mynschen vp stygen myt gode in den hemmel, auer de kunstyghen styghen myt den duuelen nedder in de helle [...] Wente de sulfften schrifftwisen vnde dunckelguden, de hateden de rechten waerheyt, vnde en wolden der lere ihesu christi nicht entfanghen.[128]
>
> [The silly and simple people ascend with God to heaven, but the skilled ones descend with the devils down to hell ... Because those learned in Scripture and the hypocrites hate the real truth and did not want to receive the teaching of Jesus Christ.]

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127 "Van deme ordene der cristene vnde erst van deme pater noster." Ibid.

128 Speygel der dogede, fol. 3v.

It is not entirely clear who the *schrifftwisen vnde dunckelguden* mentioned here are—bishops? theologians? Dominicans?—but their opposition to the "simple people" points to them belonging to some clerical order. Considering the fact that very few average parish priests held an academic degree in the Late Middle Ages and that their stereotypical lack of education might also be a topic for criticism against the clergy, the importance of religious knowledge as a factor for the privileges of the clergy remains ambiguous.[129]

An explicit formulation of the idea of the laity having a greater chance of achieving salvation than those who are educated in the Scripture is rare in the still hierarchical genre of lay didactical literature. Nonetheless, such a statement is possible and does not exceed the limits of what can be enunciated within the genre—in prosaic novels and rhymed plays such as *Bauernschwänke*, the presentation of the peasants in particular as the group that leads a life that is morally superior to that of the decadent clergy is more common. The chronicles of the mendicant orders also give peasant life and work a positive connotation.[130] In the catechetical collection *Speygel der dogede*, the anticlerical impetus lacks both a clearly defined concept of an enemy and a clearly defined positive point of reference, since "the simple people" constitute a rather large and blurry group and clerics are neither collectively condemned nor defined in any comprehensive way.

In other texts from the same genre, knowledge of Scripture and the privileges of the clergy are presented as directly grounded in the Gospels and as signs of the clergy's direct descent from the apostles. A *Passio Christi* book from Lübeck claims to quote "the glossa" on St. Peter, who asked Jesus if he was to hold all power alone or if he should entrust it to someone else in his place. Jesus answered that Peter was not to hold power alone, but in common with all who were learned in Scripture, whom Peter would anoint and ordain. Then the people asked if the priests were not to have more privileges than "normal people." Jesus answered that it was the priests' privilege not to be harmed by anyone who did not want to risk banishment from the Church and an evil end. Finally, in this scene, Jesus gives the priests power over the absolution of sins and

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[129] Scheler, "Patronage," on the education of the lower secular clergy.

[130] Ebner, Herwig. "Der Bauer in der mittelalterlichen Historiographie." In *Bäuerliche Sachkultur des Spätmittelalters*. Ed. by Heinrich Appelt. 2nd ed., 92–123. Wien: Verl. der Österreichischen Akad. der Wiss., 1997, ibid., 96.

banishment on earth and in heaven.[131] Given this traditional perspective on the clergy's power, the relative potential of the subtle anticlerical strategies in lay didactical literature to entirely change the understanding of lay religious knowledge must be taken into consideration. In this traditional view, knowledge of Scripture and descent from the apostles are used to define the clergy in opposition to the laity, thereby shaping the binomial as an absolute antithesis.

There are other subtle ways of discussing the clergy's privileges without really questioning their legitimacy. The superior knowledge of clerics about religious matters can itself be used as a metaphor: for example, the relationship between a "cleric in Paris" and the chancellor of the university is compared to every Christian's relationship to Christ: just as the Parisian cleric must study and be examined, all Christians must elevate their consciousness and will be examined by Christ when they die.[132] A cleric in Paris can be exposed to ridicule and shame when discredited, but his shame will be short and superficial compared to the shame of a Christian who answers badly from the book of consciousness at Judgment Day.[133] Furthermore, while all the examinations in front of the chancellor of the university are voluntary, all Christians must inevitably die regardless of whether they are prepared for it or not.[134] Finally, out of mercy, the chancellor might not himself question those clerics who are not terribly bright, leaving the task to a subordinate, but for Christians there is no other option but to be examined by Christ himself.[135] In this metaphor, the academic relationship between the chancellor of the university and a simple but studied monk is used as a parallel opposition for the relationship between Christ and a human, as is the case with other parallel

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131 "De glose secht dat petrus sprak. Leue here schole wii de gewalt allene hebben, edder moge wy se ymandes beuelen an uns. Do sprak vnse here, neen petre nicht gy allene, men alle de ienne de dar to de schrifft konen, vnde van iw gewiget vnde gesaluet werden, vnde alle ere nakomelinge. De iungere spreken, scholen denne nicht de prestere vorder vriheyt hebben wen ander meene lude. Do sprak vnse here. Allen vromen presteren geue ik sodane vriehit, dat se nemant schal anroren vrewelik vnde we dat an en brekt, de schal in myner acht syn, vnde nicht een guth ende nemen. Unde hyr iegen wil ik den presteren sodane mache geuen, weleme sunden se syne sunde vergeuen, de schal dar van verloset syn in dem hemmele, vnde welk mynsche de preester bindet, dat is mit dem banne verbindet, de schal ok gebunden syn in dem hemmele." Passio Christi/Van der martere vnses heren Jhesu christi, fol. 12r.

132 Speygel der dogede, fol. 224v.

133 Ibid., fol. 225r.

134 Ibid., fol. 226r.

135 Ibid., fol. 226v.

positioning of oppositions that also focus on the distinctive relationship of authority between the one and the many, the superior and the inferior poles. The bottom line is: even a studied monk, who may be privileged at home, is nothing but a small fry in Paris when he is examined by the chancellor.

In a similar way the superiority of the clerics is diminished rather than clarified when the cleric is used as a metaphor for obedience: as the cleric must obey his master (the abbot) and as he is supposed to desire a rigorous master who demands ascetic behavior and mortifications from him, likewise all Christians should feel the greatest love for those who afflict them, since this will win the greatest reward from God.[136] As in many other cases, the intended public for these texts is extremely relevant to whether they are interpreted as monastic guidelines or as guidelines for laypeople for whom the metaphorization of monastic life can be read as a blurring of the demarcation between the clergy and the laity. However, the blurring of the boundary between clergy and laity is not even close to being an intentional project in the sources investigated. Furthermore, no conscious communicative strategy can be ascribed to a particular discourse, nor is the redefinition of the boundaries and of clerical privileges consistent in the sources.

Clerics are certainly present in catechetical literature in their role as confessors, and in this context there is no attempt to diminish the boundary between the clergy and the laity. Confessional books bear the imprint of a pronounced hierarchy between clergy and laity in their very structure—the confessor is the point of reference for the entire confessional situation. Still, laypeople were required not simply to rely on the confessor and their encounter with him in confession, but to extend their self-examination far beyond that.

> We dar wol bichten wil de neme dit bock to hulpe, unde he mach schriuen syne sunde, unde mach sitten by deme prester, unde schal mit synem eghenen munde deme prester bichten alle syne sunden [. . .] Item is dat nu eyn leye de nicht schriuen kan, so mach he syne sunde tekenen und schriven in eyner anderen wise alse de kroghers unde de smede don, unde ander hant werkes lude.[137]
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> [Whoever wants to confess shall take this book for help, and he shall write down his sins, and shall sit with the priest, and shall confess his sins to the

[136] Ibid., fol. 250v.
[137] Licht der Seelen, fol. 9v.

> priest with his own mouth . . . If there is a layman who cannot write, he shall then paint his sins and write in a different way, as the innkeepers and the blacksmiths and other craftsmen do.]

Obviously, neither vernacular nor Latin literacy was any longer necessary for salvation, just as it was not a requirement in order to make a full confession or to receive the full spiritual benefits of prayers. The priest is necessary, but so is the believer's self-investigation.

A recurrent problem is the worthiness of the priest to say mass and administer the sacraments, an issue raised by all heretical movements since the Donatists. On the one hand, Catholic dogma on this question generally presented the sacraments as valid and effective regardless of the moral status of the priest, while, on the other hand, criticism of the clergy had for centuries articulated a need for pureness on the part of the mediator of the Sacrament, accompanied by a general criticism of priests in the tenor of "You do not live what you preach."[138] In didactical literature, this doctrine is not always specifically embraced, and the degree of criticism of priests in connection with the effectiveness of the Sacrament differs in the traditional texts and the Middle Low German originals. The shift is subtle but detectable, and it is likely that the influence of the nominalists played an important role, particularly that of William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel, who promoted the concept that the validity of the Sacrament was not determined by the priest, but by the faith of the believer during the sacramental act.[139]

Most of the Middle Low German didactical texts of all ideological and discursive affiliations agree on the general usefulness of the sacraments regardless of whether or not the priest leads a sinful life. The anonymous compilation *Speygel der dogede* describes the sacraments as God's work—for example, the mediating function of the priest is not mentioned in the description of baptism as a rite of purification.[140] On rare occasions this creates a space for open criticism of clerics, such as in *Van XII fruchten misse zu horen med innicheit*. The text ascribes almost magical attributes to the pure act of listening to a complete mass, as if anything one does will work out well after listening to a complete mass, even food and drink will be better digested, pregnant women will deliver more easily and so

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138 Sánchez, *Anticlericalism*, 15.

139 Müller, Otfried. *Die Rechtfertigungslehre nominalistischer Reformationsgegner: Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen und Kaspar Schatzgeyer über Erbsünde, erste Rechtfertigung und Taufe.* Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1940, 8.

140 Speygel der dogede, fol. 21v–22r.

on. If one listens really closely to the liturgy and the sermon, he might receive more grace from God than does the priest who held the mass—*Want de priester en is altzyt niet all euen wail gestalt* [since the priest is not always a good and fair person].[141] In a way that runs quite contrary to the Donatist criticism, which declares the sacraments worthless if the priest providing them is not in a state of grace, this text opens up a possibility for criticism of the clergy, precisely because the sacraments remain effective even if the priest himself is not in a state of grace. The responsibility for salvation is shifted from the priest to the believer—even though this is entirely in line with the nominalist and contritionist traditions, none of the theologians prominent in these movements are mentioned as sources. Generally speaking, the tendency to internalize religious beliefs and the role of self-examination as a supplement to a confessor's scrutiny levels the hierarchy between priest and layman.

In these examples of subtle and careful criticism of the clergy, the priest's position is not explicitly questioned, but there are several factors that make him less necessary and give the laity more options for taking control of their own salvation. Contritionism, criticism of empty formulas of piety and the absolute need for the active moral participation of the penitent in confession and in the sacrament of penance, all sources of lively debate in the fourteenth century, had gradually diminished the importance of the priest as the mediator of sacramental power. When the priest is mentioned in his capacity as confessor, his role is again diminished: the penitent should not be ashamed to tell the priest about his sins in confession, since the consequences will be much worse if the sins only come out on Judgment Day, and it was, in any case, even worse to have committed them under the watchful eyes of God and his angels.[142] This priest, a silent listener and mediator, is definitely not a figure beyond reproach or an absolutely necessary precondition for salvation in general. The binomial remains stable: the poles are no longer absolutely complementary, with clearly defined features and privileges for each group, as there has been a gradual shift in responsibility and duty.

This is obviously only one side of the coin. There are texts printed in the vernacular that convey a more traditional clerical ideology and advance the idea of a general moral and spiritual superiority of the clergy,

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[141] Van xii fruchten misse zo horen mit innicheit, fol. 2v.
[142] Speygel der dogede, fol. 208v.

especially in the case of the translated bestsellers. For example, a *Beichtbüchlein* from Magdeburg reinforces the Godlike position of the priest: "*Gedenke nicht dattu deme mynschen bychtes men dattu gode van hemmele suluen bychtes.*" [Do not think you are confessing to a human, but remember you are confessing to God in the heavens himself.][143]

A discourse supporting the priest's authority whatever his moral conduct is typical for translated bestsellers. *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis is an interesting case apart. Book IV includes a long debate about the worthiness of the priest to administer the Sacrament even in the version in the vernacular, which is addressed to "all Christians." This book *De devota exhortatione ad sacram Corporis Christi communionem* has been considered the most "catholic" part of the entire *Imitatio*, developing a doctrine on the required mindset and preparation for receiving the sacrament.[144] But besides Thomas' specific views on the penitent and receiver of the sacrament, his depiction of the role of the priest is also prominent, and it differs substantially from his nonchalance of spiritual mediation by clerics as expressed in the first three books. In this context, the separate printing of books I–III and book IV in many vernacular versions is crucial: while books I–III include a variety of points that provide a toehold for a subtle but serious anticlericalism, especially regarding the dangers of religious knowledge and the claim of an immediate relationship between the believer and Christ, book IV comes close to reading as an apology for this. In the Middle Low German region, both separate editions of book IV and one complete edition of all four books were prepared and diffused.

The author discusses and rejects the Donatist point of view, by which a sacrament is worthless if the priest providing it is not in a state of grace, assigning the priest a state of grace as a result of consecration, not on the basis of a virtuous life. The entire chapter IV, 5 *Van der werdicheyt des sacramentes vnde van deme presterliken stade* [about the value of the Sacrament and about the priestly order] establishes the priest's worthiness on the basis of his position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is the source of his right to administer the Sacrament regardless of the nature of his life and his conduct.

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143 Beichtbüchlein, Magdeburg about 1490, fol. 5r.

144 Caspers, Charles M. A. "Thomas von Kempen und die Kommunion. Die Stellung des vierten (dritten) Buches der 'Imitatio' innerhalb der spätmittelalterlichen und späteren eucharistischen Frömmigkeit." In Bodemann/Staubach, eds. *Aus dem Winkel in die Welt*, 158–172.

Even though the *Imitatio Christi* in particular can also be read as a document that sharply criticizes the clergy and the institutionalized Church in general, contrasting it with an individual way of searching for God and making daily life sacred, on this point Thomas à Kempis is radical in his affirmation of the priest's office:

> Weret sake dattu heddest engelsche reynicheyt. Unde sunte iohannes baptiste hillicheyt noch en werstu nicht werdich dat hilghe sacrament to entfangende doch to hanterende. Id en wert nicht ghegheuen den vordenst en der mynschen, dat de mynschen hilliget vnde tracteret dat sacrament cristi vnde nemen in eyne spyse dat brot der engele. Eyn grot wunderwerck vnde eyne grote werdicheyt der prester den gegheuen is dat den engelen nicht vorlenet en is, wente alle de prestere behorliken ordyneret in der kerken hebben macht misse to holdende vnde dat licham cristi to handelen, de prester is eyn dener godes brukende des wordes godes dorch insettinge vnde heringe godes.[145]
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> [Had you the purity of an angel and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, you would not be worthy to receive or administer this Sacrament. It is not because of any human merit that a man consecrates and administers the Sacrament of Christ, and receives the Bread of Angels for his food. Great is the Mystery and great the dignity of priests to whom is given that which has not been granted the angels. For priests alone, rightly ordained in the Church, have power to celebrate Mass and consecrate the Body of Christ. The priest, indeed, is the minister of God, using the word of God according to His command and appointment.][146]

The priest's function is here described as intermediating between God and humans, not because of his own merit or purity but because he is ordained to administer the Sacrament, something not even granted to angels. Even though this does not say anything about the personal qualities of the priest, he is—completely in keeping with the official doctrine—a mediator of grace by virtue of his office.

A similar issue is dealt with in connection to confession, when the importance of a righteous, rigorous and demanding confessor is discussed. In the catechetical books for laypeople written in Middle Low German, the priests are presented as far removed from an overall worthiness: they

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[145] Imitatio Christi/Dat bock van der na volginge ihesu cristi, Magdeburg 1501, fol. 110r–111r.

[146] This is taken from an English translation of the Latin original, and since it perfectly fits the Middle Low German text, it is also an example of the very close and thorough translation method that the Middle Low German edition employs. Thomas à Kempis. *The imitation of Christ*. Transl. By Aloysius Croft and Harold Bolton. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1940, book 4, chapter 5.

can be dumb, lazy or vicious, but this does not make confession entirely useless, although it does make it much less useful. Whatever can be said about lazy, lecherous and greedy priests is of much less importance than the same lack of moral quality in a confessor, who was certainly normally a priest. However, it is only in his role as confessor that this moral lassitude becomes a problem. There are confessors who are unwise and are therefore unable to properly identify sins, and they are thus unable to cure the soul. Even the possibility of a confessor being defrocked should he violate the seal of the confessional is mentioned. Unfortunately, many people choose unworthy confessors out of convenience.[147] His moral quality is not a given, but the reader is repeatedly urged to search for a worthy confessor, since confessing to a lazy or unlearned man would be *in gelyker wyse als dar eyn blynde den anderen leydet, unde se vallen beide in den grauen* [like one blind man leading another, and they both fall into the ditch].[148] For extraordinary serious sins, such as sins against nature and the like, only a bishop would have the power of absolution.[149] This means that, on the one hand, one is required to search for a wise and skilful confessor, and, on the other hand, skill comes with the higher ranked office—here the potential criticism of the clergy is undermined by the reference to the assured worthiness of higher clerical offices.

There seems to be no consensus about this question. The anonymous *Vorsmack und Vrokost des hemmelischen paradises* mentions that a confessor himself must be both exacting and righteous. Using St. Bernhard as reference, the text says that a confessor cannot punish a penitent for the sins that he himself is guilty of, since only those who are able to love themselves can love others.[150] In the same context, the metaphor of the blind leading the blind is used again: one of the obstacles to a true confession is the deliberate choice of a confessor who is unable to distinguish a mortal sin from a venial sin—he would thus betray himself, "and one blind man would throw another into a hole."[151]

The image of the two blind men tumbling into a hole or a ditch has suggestive power on several levels: first, it calls to mind all of the biblical imagery of blindness as incapacity to hear God's word and recognize

147 Speygel der dogede, fol. 234v–236r.
148 Beichtbüchlein, Magdeburg about 1490, fol. 4v.
149 Ibid.
150 Vorsmack und Vrokost des hemmelischen Paradises, fol. 56r.
151 "Int v. Wen he mit voersate uthkust enen unweten prester dede nich ten weet vnderschedinghe der doetsunde vnde der degheliken sunde, so vorreth he sik suluen, vnde de eine blinde warpt den anderen in de kulen." Ibid., fol. 55r.

the truth; second, it places an inappropriate confessor on the same level as the penitent, since the distinguishing quality of each of them is their blindness; third, it depicts an incorrect choice of confessor as not only improper, but also dangerous, in that it amounts to relying on somebody who is unable to provide support.

Obviously, this view of the role of the confessor is far removed from the general apologetic view expressed in books such as the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Hemmelsche funtgrove*. The opposition between clerics and laity exists and is reinforced, but it is a relation of mutual responsibilities, and belonging to one group or the other within the opposition does not say anything about one's position in the hierarchy of virtue—and this is what counts, after all.

As is the case with similar binary distinctions, the clergy-laity distinction gains a particular potency in connection to other parallel oppositions, which serves to strengthen its hierarchical connotation and its grounding in the general order of the cosmos and the people. Crucial to this is the extension of the exegesis of the Fourth Commandment beyond a question of respect for one's biological parents to respect for ecclesiastical and secular rulers. The integration of the clergy-laity distinction into the general metaphor of the family as a model for society is a powerful and suggestive image that reaches beyond anti-clerical issues: one must respect one's father even if he fails to be righteous, virtuous and worthy of respect. This is especially obvious in the *Bokeken van deme repe*, which asserts that many priests fail to be good fathers, yet it still emphasizes the obligation to respect them—not everything they say, but in regard to those rules that accord with God's law and will.[152] This is amplified by the parallel positioning of good parents with God and the bad parents with the devil, who is also said to be the father of the bad priests, who are in turn only able to produce bad children.[153] The impetus for the criticism of bad priests is thus expressed in the form of a parallel positioning of priest and father, with the metaphorical children being obliged to be self-conscious and personally accountable. Respect does not involve uncritical allegiance here, a truly uncommon point of view at the time.

The hierarchical relationship between confessor and penitent is omnipresent, even when not expounded upon, in both confessional and catechetical books, and readers are reminded of this from time to time.

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[152] Bokeken van deme repe, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 72.
[153] Ibid., 73.

When the focus is not on the need for self-examination, but on the need for further scrutiny by the confessor, as in the *Kerstenspiegel* by Dietrich Coelde van Munster, the confessor is mentioned as necessary to the examination of sins.[154] Even though the text in general stands in a contritionist tradition and emphasizes self-examination,[155] the confessor remains a central figure. The same book presents "Five Commandments established by the Holy Church" directly after the explanation of the Decalogue, thereby establishing the power of the Church as directly descending from God, strongly legitimizing the social control exercised by priests. The duty to go to church, to hear mass and to confess at least once a year thus becomes a Commandment with the force of the Decalogue, and the hierarchy between priest and laity appears on some level to be God's will.[156]

Both of the texts mentioned here as examples of a use of the clergy-laity distinction in a way that supports the clergy are translations of otherwise successful texts into Middle Low German—the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis and Dietrich Coelde's *Kerstenspiegel*. On the other hand, those texts that tend to diminish the importance of the hierarchical barriers by focusing on the laity alone and by establishing a Christian order, are anonymous compilations—*Speygel der Leyen, Speygel der dogede* and *Licht der Seelen*. The clergy-laity opposition thus seems to be a rhetorical figure that is used in all texts, with its meaning shifting based on whether or not the text is part of a traditional clerical discourse or a discourse setting the well-off burghers into focus, potentially with an impetus of questioning the clergy's privileges.

There is yet another area where the clergy-laity opposition is used in a corrupted form—in its connection with the good-evil opposition. As is the case for the rhetorical effect of this opposition in connection to

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154 "[…] vnde alle de sick suluen myßbruken darumme dat desse vorschreuen plagen vp den minschen kamen welker den bichtvaders behoret deper vnde beth to vndersoeken." Kerstenspiegel, Rostock 1507, fol. 19v.

155 Bast, Robert J. "Strategies of Communication: Late-Medieval Catechisms and the Passion Tradition." In *The broken body: Passion devotion in late-Medieval culture*. Ed. by A. A. MacDonald et al., 133–144. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998, ibid., 138.

156 "Dat XII ca. van v baden der hilghen kerken de alle cristen minschen schuldich sint to holdende. Alle sondaghe schaltu hôren eyne heele missen myt groter andacht vnde alze me dat ewangelium lest edder singet schaltu recht vpstan mit werdicheit. Du schalt ok to dem minsten alle yaer eyns bichten vnde dat hylghe sacrament entfangen, id were denne dat du dat levest mit rade dines bichtuaders. So wi des nicht don, scôle wy bedwungen werden in de kerke nicht tokamen, vnde na sinem dode vp nene ghewyede stede begrauen werden." Kerstenspiegel, Lübeck about 1498/99, fol. 22r–22v.

gender-based oppositions and authority-based oppositions, the social order in this case differs from the order of virtues. Generally, both clerics and laypeople can constitute either of the poles of this opposition, but in this specific context, a moral order can overthrow the traditional hierarchy. In texts directed to people living in monastic orders, the general objective is, of course, to present them as the good people, with those who are not part of a monastic order being evil. However, the concept is elastic enough to encompass different readers. *De pacientia libellus* is an example of a text originally composed for a monastic circle, but as it was written in the vernacular and published in print, potential readers expanded to encompass a broader and non-clerical public. This led to the circulation of monastic ideals among lay audiences, which also meant that laypeople gained general insight into monastic life leading to a shift in the implementation of the clergy-laity distinction.

De pacientia libellus extends the clergy-laity opposition in the direction of a metaphor describing the relationship between God and human beings as one of a stock breeder to his animals: those animals that are meant for slaughter are allowed to graze on the land and eat their fill for a short while, while those who are meant to live are strained under the yoke. Similarly, evil people who are doomed can do what they want and sin as much as they want, while God punishes and scrutinizes those he intends to save.[157] In this metaphor, there is no assignment of good or evil to particular earthly social groups, but obviously those who enjoy privileges on earth, such as the clergy, will be worse off in the long run. The dissolution of the connection between good and the clergy and evil and laypeople becomes even clearer when the same animal metaphor is used and the evil people are described as those "whom God panders and to whom he gives secular goods and wealth, power and honor"—which obviously does not apply to all laypeople. The demanding question, which is of both theological and personal interest, as to why evil people may be rich, powerful and successful, while many good people are not, is explained by this metaphor about the seemingly privileged position of the animal

[157] "Want die beisten die man doden will die leist man vrylich louffen in die weide ind leist yn folgen alle yr genoichden eyn kortze tzyt. Mer dat men leuendich halden wilt dat slept man an den ploich ind dwinget it mit disciplinen. Alsus so louffen die bŏse mynschen eyn korte tzyt mit genoichen den sunden [. . .] mer die gode mynschen gaint eynen harden wech der duechden und der tribulacien to dem ewigen leuen." De pacientia libellus, fol. 8r.

that is to be slaughtered.[158] For a monastic audience, this might apply to all laypeople who deal in secular goods, but for a lay or mixed audience, both laypeople and the clergy can either be rich and mean-spirited or good and poor. When a metaphor remains stable—in this case, the cattle and breeder metaphor and the connected clergy-laity opposition—and the audience changes, the result can be an entirely different interpretation of the metaphor itself and an additional blurring of the once-clear clergy-good and laypeople-bad implications.

Christianity is the only possible target domain for the clergy-laity opposition in the discourses of lay didactical literature. Only Christians have a clergy, and consequently only Christians can be laypeople. Members of other religions, who might disrupt the opposition, go unmentioned, and neither the question of their membership in one or the other group nor the consequences of their exclusion are discussed in lay didactical texts. The clear boundaries between the two poles of the opposition face another potential disturbance in the form of Christian women and their options for entering the clergy. However, clear statements are made to counter this possibility. While the inclusion or exclusion of Christian women in different orders is seldom explicitly addressed, in the case of this particular opposition, the impossibility of women entering the upper echelons of the hierarchy is clearly stated. As expressed in the canon law *Summa to dude*:

> Van geystliken ampten der wyff, xl. Wiff vrouwen edder iunckvrowen wů hillich unde ghelert de sint, so mogen se den karacter doch nicht entfangen unde dat sacrament der papliken wiginge unde ok neyn werk dǒn unde ampt holden dat de prester unde papen dǒn. Alse predyken de epistolen unde ewangelien unde missen lesen, unde aflosen van sunden unde den ban gheuen und affnemen.[159]
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> [On spiritual duties of women, xl. Married women or unmarried women, as holy and educated as they might be, are still not permitted to receive the ordinations or the sacrament of papal consecration or to do the works or provide the services that the priests and monks do. That is, to preach epistles and the Gospels or read masses, absolve from sins and propose or dissolve a ban.]

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[158] "Alsus soe gunnet got den boesen mynschen want gelicher wys als man eyn beiste de men diden will wail gifft essen ind dick drycken unde leist id slaiffen unde syn gemach in allen dingen haven. Alsus so gunnet got den boesen mynschen, dat sy dicke yren willen krigen unde tzytliche haue unde guede, maicht unde ere hauen." Ibid., fol. 9r.

[159] Summa to dude, letter V, chapter 40.

There is no reason provided for the exclusion of women from the clergy here, and none of the other texts using the clergy-laity opposition so much as mention the possibility of women entering the clergy. This points to the internalization and normalization of the Catholic status quo of excluding women from ecclesiastical posts, as well as to the lack of a definition of the boundaries between the complementary poles. The argument used to level the clergy—(male) laypeople hierarchy, with knowledge about religious matters, does not constitute an argument in favor of educated women being ordained. Furthermore, other factors that could possibly disturb the boundaries are not raised for discussion—the question of whether the introduction of deaconesses and abbesses might in effect represent their ordination and thereby the de facto creation of female clerics, for example.[160] The potential for religious women to disrupt the clear boundaries between clerics and laypeople is excluded from the context of the opposition. The aspiration for a more equal relationship between the poles does not include a substantial change of the subordination and exclusion of women.

Generally, lay didactical literature uses the terminology for clergy and laity in a relational way—the distinction is not introduced to further differentiate either of the groups. It is used to describe a boundary between the two, a boundary that is gradually shifting in importance. In most of the texts, clergy can, on the basis of the overwhelming focus on the relationship between confessor and penitent, be presumed to mean secular clergy, given that the confessor is usually a parish priest. However, since the mendicant orders have the right to hear confession as well, even this distinction remains uncertain. It seems that a different terminology that is based on spiritual advancement is used for members of monastic orders and secular clergy, but whenever this topic is discussed, the boundary between entering a monastic order and living in clausura, on the one hand, and living in the world while adhering to certain rules of chastity, on the other hand, is not clarified, and different audiences might have different readings. The fact that explicit rules for spiritual life are often formulated for women utterly complicates the terminology and blurs the distinction between clergy and laity. Nonetheless, even with its concrete implications shifting and blurring, as a semantic figure the opposition has

[160] Macy, Gary. *The hidden history of women's ordination: Female clergy in the medieval West*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008, 91.

a very distinct function: it separates a functional class of people—those who administer the sacraments—from all other people, and it constantly stresses this difference, ultimately serving to define the significance of the laity and the likelihood of its spiritual advancement in comparison or in contrast to the clergy. The distinction has a relative character, since both groups are defined in relation to the other. The parental metaphor for the Church and believers appears to be stable and is frequently used, but almost entirely in the context of the Fourth Commandment. In other texts, a confessor can occasionally be referred to as a father, but generally the most important area of application for this image is the integration of a large number of people—all believers—into a subordinate group, rather than determining the hierarchy in an individual relationship between two people.

Until now, all binomials found in the didactical literature operated within society. Restricting the range of a social image to those who were saved, which was a feature of the tripartite metaphors and ordering schemes, is not a factor in oppositions: all humans are—accordingly—either male or female, or not worth mentioning. All humans are parents or children, or lords or servants. And—all are either clergy or laity? There are others who do not belong to the clerical order, but are also not laypeople: semireligious people, tertiaries, recluses and highly ranked abbesses. There are also people outside of the Christian boundary who are neither clerics nor laypeople—pagans, heretics and Jews. They are not children of the Holy Church. Here we have another pronounced feature of depictions of society in binomial pairs, the potential for exclusion in a trope that claims to provide a complete description. The parental imagery for the relationship between the Church and believers excluded non-Christians, as did the clergy-laity distinction. The world, however, was larger than that, and there were binomials that specifically identified the others. The others in this text corpus are almost exclusively Jews, with pagans mentioned much less frequently in the sources investigated and, strangely enough, Muslims going entirely unaddressed.

V.7 *Christians and Jews*

The history of Jewish-Christian relations in the German lands in the Middle Ages is a tragic, violent and cruel one. It is not possible—or even desirable—to evade this tragedy when examining the sources, and in the

case of the lay didactical literature this means that it is not possible to find a story in this corpus not written by Christians, not corrupted by anti-Jewish resentment and stereotypes and not more or less directly establishing the basis for subsequent anti-Jewish pogroms. In few other cases is the connection between social imagery and social reality so direct as is the case with anti-Jewish texts. At the same time, the influence of direct anti-Jewish propaganda based on supposedly recent events, such as blood libels, should be reconsidered in light of the vast amount of lay didactical literature that included more or less vicious and explicit anti-Jewish attacks: the discursive basis was always readily available, even without blood libels.

Considering the amount of research that has been carried out on all aspects of anti-Judaism in the Middle Ages, what can be added by an investigation of the topic based on lay didactical literature? The following chapters aim to address two gaps in the research by approaching anti-Jewish stereotypes as a part of social imagery: first, assessing the importance, function and position of anti-Jewish stereotypes in comparison to other resentments, or, formulated more optimistically, the position of non-Christians in lay didactical literature and its overall social conception;[161] second, focusing not on the topics and phenomena that make up anti-Jewish stereotypes, but on the linguistic forms in which they appear—oppositions, metaphors and metonymies. An analysis of the frequency and textual context of these tropes in lay didactical literature will add to knowledge about the function of anti-Judaism for Christian self-perception. An attempt to describe anti-Jewish resentment as an integral part of lay didactical literature provides an approach that differs to some degree from the numerous studies that focus either on purely anti-Jewish texts, such as records of blood libels, or the equally numerous studies that focus on lay didactical literature from a spiritual rather than a political angle.[162] Approaching the issue from either angle can easily obscure the

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[161] Exemplary studies with a similar focus on several Latin texts: Cohen, Jeremy. *Living letters of the law: Ideas of the Jew in medieval Christianity*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999.

[162] An exception is the study by Manuela Niesner, who has contextualized the German *Adversus Iudaeos* literature of the fourteenth century as part of the rise of lay didactical literature in general and the specific need to address potential doubts Christian laypeople might have when studying the Bible on their own. Arguments against the Jewish faith were automatically arguments for the belief in Christ, and it was not really necessary to depict the Jews as demons in this context. Only a small number of the early *Adversus Iudaeos* texts make use of anti-Jewish stereotypes in polemical writing, with the intention of depicting Jews as dangerous and consequently affecting a change in the attitudes

crucial and integral role that anti-Jewish resentment plays in fifteenth-century ideology in general: unlike anticlericalism and antifeminism, the other two frequent ideologemes in the corpus, anti-Judaism is common to all of the discourses, literary genres and ideologies.

"Christianity in general" is the target domain of most of the tropes for society, constructing a clear demarcation and order of inside and outside that uses religion as a basis for all other differentiating factors—functionality, gender, virtuousness. Metaphors for society that include Christianity have as their main goal internally ordering society. However, the ambiguity of this demarcation emerges in several semantic relations: Christian society is not a self-explanatory, pure and clear organism, but rather contains elements that pose problems for a definition of inside and outside. Sinners and women belong to the elements that threaten clear boundaries, as do Jews. This resembles the difficulties that the German nation-state, particularly *völkische* ideology, continued to grapple with in the ninteenth and twentieth centuries in its efforts to appropriately define the inside and the outside of Germanness, with sinners being replaced, broadly speaking, by homosexuals and gender transgressions in general.[163] But the function of the Jew as the fundamental other[164] and its specific place in Western—German—tradition is enduring and well-grounded in Christian religion, and consequently is also easily recognized in lay didactical literature. It is reasonable to assume that the religious opposition finds an expression in a linguistic opposition, both on the basis of logical conjecture and on the basis of the quantity of modern scholarship dealing with Christians and Jews as an opposition. This reflects the actual separation of Christians and Jews in daily life, something that the Catholic Church had systematically worked towards since at least the Council of Basel.[165]

The linguistic theory of prototypes provides one approach to explaining the position of the Jew in Christian didactical literature. A prototype

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and policies of secular authorities regarding Jews. Niesner, Manuela. *"Wer mit juden well disputiren": Deutschsprachige Adversus-Judaeos-Literatur des 14. Jahrhunderts.* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005, 458.

[163] Planert, Ute. "Reaktionäre Modernisten. Zum Verhältnis von Antisemitismus und Antifeminismus in der völkischen Bewegung." *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 11 (2002).

[164] The differentiation between "the Jew / the Jews" as an ideological construct containing several cultural, religious and gender stereotypes and Jews as people of Jewish faith is crucial for the analysis of medieval texts and will, as far as possible, be considered in this chapter.

[165] Herzig, "Die Juden in Deutschland," 15.

is the best exemplar found in a single category and thus the most frequently used example, point of reference or symbol such as the apple for the category of fruit. There is no practical reason why an apple should be a more appropriate fruit than a strawberry, and different prototypes share no common structures or features besides being the accepted representative of a species.[166] The same applies to the Christian in the human category in the medieval literary world: he serves as the representative exemplar of the category "human being." The prototype chosen is always an extremely culture-specific and abstract psychological entity. A prototype is based on a cognitive point of reference rather than on a number of clearly identifiable aspects defining it. Just as a sparrow is perceived as a bird more readily than a penguin—even though from the point of view of biological data, both are birds—the Christian represented in medieval books perceives himself as more human than the Jew, even though the Jew is acknowledged as part of humanity overall. The Christian has more cue validity than the Jew, who in his turn has more cue validity/humanity than the pagan. The identification of a prototype is connected to the speaker's intention—naturally, the male Christian speaker has a strong interest in identifying himself as the most fitting exemplar of the human species. Still, the theory of prototypes is not so much about which exemplar is best—even though it undoubtedly includes a hierarchy—but it is about which exemplar the members of a homogenous group identify as the best representative. In a group of male Christians, reaching a consensus that male Christians constitute the prototype did not likely pose much difficulty. At the same time, this concept focuses more intensely on the potentially blurry transitions between Christians and Jews—based on the potential of conversion in both directions—which explains the fear of the Jew representing the internal enemy in Christian imagination.[167]

But still—considering the omnipresence of anti-Jewish statements of different kinds and character in lay didactical literature, there is relatively little evidence of a concrete Christian-Jew opposition in the texts. More commonly, the Jew is depicted without his Christian other, or within the Christian-Jew-pagan triad. Additionally, in the theology of the day, the

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[166] The characteristics of the prototype are drawn from Dörschner, Norbert. *Dichotomische Verfahren der linguistischen Semantik.* Münster: Nodus-Publ., 2003, 15–40 and 111–141. Dörschner does not use the example of Christian and Jew.

[167] Hauschild sees the concept of "the Jew" as the internal enemy as deeply rooted in German social sciences as it is in the Christian imagination. Hauschild, Thomas. "Christians, Jews, and the Other in German Anthropology." *American Anthropologist. New Series* 99, no. 4 (1997).

image of the Jew is not entirely negative, reflecting a fundamental Christian ambivalence concerning the Jew's role as a predecessor to Christianity and as witnesses of the truth of the Gospels, on the one hand, and Christ's murderer, who was too blind to recognize the Messiah, on the other hand.[168] In contrast to many other theological debates and controversies that are not taken up at all in religious literature in the vernacular, the different factors making up the Christian view of Jews are at least presented, even if they are not debated. In didactical literature, righteous Jews and Jews as fellow city dwellers and human beings appear alongside fierce accusations directed at them as the murderers and torturers of Christ. But this ambivalence is far from balanced, since the various texts dealing with the Passion of Christ, as well as those that deal with purely anti-Jewish issues (host desecration stories, *Adversus Iudaeos* texts and polemics about Jewish rituals), lack a counterpart presenting positive Jewish imagery. The third possibility, neutral Jewish imagery, is also relatively rare.

In many cases, lay didactical literature fails to reproduce the imagery and relationships found in other discursive areas: the connection between Jews and usury is not predominant in these texts, compared to, for example, Franciscan sermons on the topic.[169] A synonymy between Jew and heretic, for example, evidenced in studies on inquisitorial practices in the fourteenth century,[170] is not to be found in this sample, as questions about Jewish belief, conversion and apostasy are largely neglected. An exception is the treatise *Bewährung, dass die Juden irren*, which first attempts to prove the Christian belief that Jesus is the Messiah on the basis of pagan and Jewish books, then provides a couple of explanations as to why Jews—despite the evidence presented—refuse to believe in Christ and convert to Christianity. The list reads like a list of contemporary anti-Semitic stereotypes:

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[168] Extensively described according to the Augustinian doctrine of witness in Cohen, *Living letters*, 35ff.

[169] Cohen, Jeremy. *The friars and the Jews: The evolution of medieval anti-Judaism*. 2nd ed. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983, on lay didactical preaching 226ff; Schulze, Ursula. "wan ir unhail . . . daz ist iwer hail." Predigten zur Judenfrage vom 12. bis 16. Jahrhundert." In *Juden in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters: Religiöse Konzepte, Feindbilder, Rechtfertigungen.* Ed. by Ursula Schulze, 109–133. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002.

[170] Foa, Anna. "The Witch and the Jew: two Alikes that were not the Same." In *From witness to witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian thought*. Ed. by Jeremy Cohen, 361–374. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997, ibid., 364.

> Hyr merke der orsake wor vmme de yoden nicht cristen wyllen werden. De erste orsake is de grote giricheit de se heben to tidlikem ghude [...] vnde wenne se cristeliken louen entfangen wolden so mosten se er yodesche gud vorlaten da mogen se ouerst myt nichte don vnde buuen er in dem vnloue [...] also dat se den cristen van nature vyende synt vnde se haten [...] De drude vrage is dat de cristelike loue an etliken artikelen gantse hoch vnde swar is to begripen den de nich cristen sind alze de dreualdicheit in dren personen in enem gotliken wesende, godlike vnde minschlike natur.[171]
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> [Note the reasons why the Jews do not want to become Christians. The first reason is the great greed they have for temporal goods... and when they receive the Christian faith they must leave their Jewish goods, which they first do not want to do, and thus remain within their disbelief... also that they are enemies of the Christians by nature and hate them... the third aspect is that the Christian faith is very lofty and with many articles that are difficult to understand for those who are not Christians, such as the Trinity with three persons in one godly being, godly and human nature.]

Even though Christian dogma generally acknowledges the possibility of Jews converting and even strives to achieve the conversion of as many people as possible, many late medieval texts, this one among them, mix the question of conversion with the assertion that Jews oppose conversion by "nature." Jews are said to be overly enthralled with earthly goods, which they would have to give up should they convert, and they are said to be enemies of Christians, although no basis for this is established. Additionally, the mysteries of Christian faith are presented as something automatically understood by Christians but not by Jews (and pagans), and obviously this knowledge does not result from baptism, but is grounded in some idea of a Christian "race."

Bewährung, dass die Juden irren is a text translated from a learned monastic discourse for the audience of lay didactical literature. It does not surrender many of its theological pretensions and references numerous Scriptural sources, the Church Fathers, theologians and even Rabbis. It frequently discusses questions usually seen as too complicated for lay purposes such as the Trinity, predestination, prefiguration and so on. This text clearly crosses the boundary between religious anti-Judaism and "modern" racist anti-Semitism, and it does so by using Christians and Jews as a clearly dichotomous opposition. No dialectical relationship between the two poles is apparent, but they are presented as absolute opposites, segregated from each other by intellectual qualities, characteristics and habits. Even though this imagery is deeply rooted in learned discourse, it

[171] Bewährung, fol. 32v–33r.

also appears in texts originally written as anti-Jewish pamphlets: Johannes Pfefferkorn uses the exact same argument—Jews do not want to convert because of their love for earthly goods—and evinces the same scepticism about the use of conversion and baptism as a potential "cure" for Jewishness.[172]

For the analysis of Christian-Jew oppositions or triads as metaphors for society, the numerous studies on the social history of Jews in medieval Germany and on the rise and function of anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish stereotypes and pogroms are of limited significance, as neither has much connection to the specific semantics of Jewish imagery in lay didactical literature. Furthermore, most of Johannes Pfefferkorn's texts—written in the vernacular, with some being translated into Latin—and the later case against the Hebraist, Johannes Reuchlin,[173] are too specific to be included in an investigation of Christian-Jew oppositions.[174] Pfefferkorn's descriptions of Jewish rites, which have as their goal obtaining a general ban on Jewish and Hebrew books, are considered a new stage and quality in both the form and subject matter of anti-Jewish propaganda.[175] The repeated mention of Jews in late medieval lay didactical literature is of a different nature.

As a model for an explanation of the frequency with which Jews appear in these texts, Anthony Bale's study on anti-Jewish imagery in medieval lay didactical literature from England is interesting but contradictory. Bale interprets the variety of anti-Jewish imagery as an expression of intimacy rather than unfamiliarity: the intimate experience of Jews as neighbours and the rhetorical strategies and theologically grounded anti-Jewish

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[172] "Dat vi capitel ind dat leste. Es ist manncher iode inwendich in seynem hertzen eyn gut cristen, vnd bleybt nocht als eyn jude vngedaufft. Ich halden das es gesche vill uss dyser vrsache, man vindt manigen boesen juden der laufft in eyn landt und lest sich douffen, nit das er waer cristen werden wil dan alleyn darumb das er gelt unde gut erwerben vnd uberkomen ader in vreuden und wollust und vreiheit geleich vns leben moege." Johannes Pfefferkorn, Ich heyß eyn buchlijn der iuden beicht, fol. 14r.

[173] Oberman, Heiko A. "Johannes Reuchlin: Von Judenknechten zu Judenrechten." In *Reuchlin und die Juden*, 39–64.

[174] Kirn, Hans-Martin. *Das Bild vom Juden im Deutschland des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts: dargestellt an den Schriften Johannes Pfefferkorns*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1989; Martin, Ellen. *Die deutschen Schriften des Johannes Pfefferkorn: zum Problem des Judenhasses und der Intoleranz in der Zeit der Vorreformation*. Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1994; Rummel, Erika. *The case against Johann Reuchlin: religious and social controversy in sixteenth-century Germany*, Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

[175] Burnett, Stephen G. "Distorted Mirrors: Antonius Margaritha, Johann Buxtorf and Christian Ethnographies of the Jews." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, no. 2 (1994): 275.

imageries constitute the two factors that facilitate the demonization of the Jews. "The Other—the Jew in the text—is neither alien nor outside, neither separate from nor opposite to the Christian selves [. . .] who discussed this Jewish other. The other is that which is inside, that which we find throughout medieval culture even when it was not really there."[176] As in medieval England, there were almost no Jewish communities in the Middle Low German region, at least not in the towns, where the last expulsion took place in Cologne in 1424. Consequently, the concept of the Jew as a representative of the "internal enemy" is relevant only as an expression of a fear of conversion to Judaism and for the oft-occurring equation of the Jew with the Christian sinner, particularly the usurer.

As in many other studies on anti-Semitic imagery, Bale sees the relationship between the imagery and the actual Jewish community as the signifier and the signified, even though he acknowledges that the signifier "can flourish without its signified,"[177] and that the imagery develops without any relationship to the existence and nature of actual Jews. In this regard, Jews and pagans should fulfil the same function for the Christian ideology, since both occur frequently in religious texts, but very rarely in northern German daily life. In terms of social imagery, the question is one of the function and place occupied by Jews in relationship to Christians in forming the social entity: are they always on the outside, at the border of Christian society, or are they perceived as a part of society, even if estranged from it? This question must be answered differently in the case of each social image: the *revues des états*, for example, generally have a place for the Jew, while the mystical body of Christ explicitly does not. The primary question in this chapter will be what the expression of Jewish-Christian relationship in binomial pairs means for the conception of both society and its other.

In all texts that deal simultaneously with Christians and Jews, it is common for the Jews to have no voice: they are mute objects of debate, investigation and analysis by Christians, and one consequence of this hierarchical relationship is that the image of the Jew is always askew, if not flat-out biased. Due to the didactical situation, objectification and subjugation to a hierarchical order is the reality for the majority of Christian readers as well. However, uneducated lay Christians who are objectified by these

[176] Bale, Anthony. *The Jew in the medieval book: English antisemitisms, 1350–1500.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006, 166.
[177] Ibid., 166.

didactics still belong to the same prototypic group as the authors of the text, while Jews are something different and semantically marked out as such. The bias can be expressed in different rhetorical forms: there are the descriptions of the Jews alone, without the contrasting Christian matrix—these are especially prominent in the narratives about the Passion of Christ, or in explicitly anti-Jewish texts such as those written by Johannes Pfefferkorn describing Jewish feasts and rituals—and there are the texts where Christian and Jew are explicitly counterposed, with contrasting attributes and places in a hierarchy. It can also be assumed that Jews have an implicit presence in many of the texts dealing entirely with Christians as the omnipresent outsider and "other".

Of these three styles, texts with explicit oppositions are in the minority. This is surprising, since the main function of negative stereotypes and depictions of Jews has always been to create a simplified counter-image of the positively self-identified group, the Christians. The relationship portrayed in didactical literature is not that simple, probably because a basic concern is to admonish Christians and to draw a line between the virtuous and the wicked within Christianity, always allowing for the possibility of spiritual growth and improvement. Within the framework of the didactical purpose, the possibility of damnation at the Last Judgment is an overarching threat used to augment Christian efforts, rather than being presented as the outcome awaiting most readers. Very few are inevitably doomed, this category being reserved for the Jews, as well as for Christian usurers and heretics. As a result, many texts instead use Jew-(Christian) sinner as a binomial. The transition from one to the other is quite smooth as, for example, in the canon law paragraph concerning the right of lords to charge special taxes:

> How the lords may tax the Jews, vi [...] If a country comes into poverty, then the lords might very well collect special taxes against common use, because [the Jews] have been taking their goods unrighteously and by usury from the common man. Also, if a Jew or a usurer commits a sin, he is supposed to atone for it with money rather than with other penance, and thereby you take not what is theirs but what belongs to other people.[178]

[178] "Wo de heren de ioden moghen beschatten, vi [...] Weret ok dat ein lant edder eine meynheit nôth antrede, so mochte de here wol bouen de gewonheit nemen van der wegen dat se ôre gud hebben to unrechte unde dat mit woker van der gemeynheit nemen. Unde darumme wenne eyn wokener edder ein iode sunde deit den scal men boten laten mit gelde mere wen mit anderer bôte, dar mede nimpt men ône nicht dat ôre is men dat ander luden is." Summa to dude, letter I, chapter VI.

The special vulnerability of Jewish communities to the arbitrary levying of taxes and demands for payments by landlords is justified by equating the Jew and the usurer, a type of sin that holds a special place in lay didactical literature, even in cases where only Christians are addressed. The opposition looks like this:

landlords
——————————— = society/the state
Jews, usurers & the common man

Again, a basic division is that between the authorities and everyone else, and the authorities had a freer hand when dealing with Jews and usurers in order to protect the "common man." Equating Jews and usurers is perfectly obvious, since the source assumes that Jews earn their living uniquely by money lending. Defining usury and Jewishness as synonymous and as moral qualities establishes that Christians can also end up in the sphere of evil that is beyond redemption—every Jew is a usurer, but not all usurers are Jews. Addressing usury, one of the sins foremost feared by scholastic writers, in this way dialectically turns Judaism into a moral quality, simultaneously establishing that those Christians involved in usury are irreversibly doomed. If Judaism represents a moral quality, or rather the lack of a moral quality, this legitimizes righteous Christian lords imposing heavy and otherwise unfair taxes on Jews, and at the same time places Jews and sinners at the bottom of a moral hierarchy, with the Christian lords at the top and, consequently, average Christians in the middle. The notion of Judaism as a moral quality is intertwined with the question of righteous authority in general and of the specific answers provided by canon law.

The connection between Jews and usurers led to the two being equated, especially in the propaganda of the Friars and in popular fifteenth-century sermons that were the precursors to numerous expulsions. Again, however, most research on this topic has been done based on sources from the southern German lands and Italy, while examples of Friars preaching anti-Jewish sermons in the north have been poorly documented. How compelling the connection between Jews and usury was for Middle Low German readers is, as a result, difficult to estimate. Lay didactical books, however, allow for a differentiated picture of this connection. In most of the catechetical material, the usurer is explicitly Christian, and the texts aim at his expulsion from Christian society as a consequence of his

moral privation. The exempla in the Middle Low German version of the *Seelentrost*, for example, explicitly deal with usurers who wish to end their lives in a monastery, pointing towards the importance of usury as an exemplary Christian sin as well.[179]

The strict separation between Christians and Jews in canon law and the exposure of logical inconsistencies of theology in lay didactical literature—such as the double character of Christ's death as a willing sacrifice and as an assassination committed by Jews[180]—leads to the most extensive use of the Christian-Jew opposition in catechetical texts. Jewish rituals are often presented as the antithesis of Christian rules and required rituals. Many of these seem to be a reaction to obvious inconsistencies in Christian dogma, such as the difference between Shabbath and Sunday, which is hard to justify based on Scripture. No real explanation is provided as to why Jews have Saturday as their holy day and Christians Sunday, but the importance of the distinction is reinforced in explanations of the Decalogue. This is an obvious place for these explanations, since the importance of the Decalogue for both religions is well-established and unquestioned, creating serious problems of demarcation for Christian writers—Robert James Bast has pointed to the fact that the Decalogue, the most essential element in fifteenth-century catechetical advice, had been dealt with extremely cautiously during previous centuries, probably precisely because of the problems this commonality of Christian and Jewish faith posed for Christian doctrine.[181] An example is the Third Commandment, with Christians being asked to work even harder on Saturdays, so it does not appear that they are keeping the Jewish laws.[182] Furthermore, different ways of keeping the holy day are described in order to point out an alleged lack of spirituality and abundance of laziness and feasting in

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179 Seelentrost, p. 200.

180 "Betekent dat wy uns scholen vromeden unde entfernen van den ioden dede syn van der secten, unde louen alze de weren deden heren in deme stillen vrydaghe offerden, dat is, se crutzigheden ene, welkere offeringhe he suluen wolde anders en mochten se ene nicht hebben an gheroret hadde he suluen nicht ghewolt." Speygel der Leyen, fol. 39r.

181 Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 32–34.

182 "Hyr schole gy merken den dach de gebaden was to virende in der olden Jodeschen ee, dat was de sunavent [...] de vire des sonnauendes was ok gegeuen vnde ghebaden den ioden, also ene figure vnde een teeken twyer to kamende dynge [...] so en schole wy cristene nycht des sonnauendes viren, men meer arbeyden vp den sonnauent, wen vp enen anderen dach, vp dat wy nicht werden ghemerket, vnde gheseen den ioden na volgen in ere vire." Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 281v–282v. "An deme sonnauende schole wy cristene mynschen allerleye arbeyt don, dat wy nicht werden gheseen dat wy iodesche wyse dolden." Licht der Seelen, fol. 29r.

the Jewish celebration of Shabbath: while Christians are supposed to do good deeds and take their spiritual rest, it is said that Jews avoid work on Shabbath only in order to have more time for wicked and shallow deeds. Given the wicked way that Jews celebrate their holy day, work in the field for the men and textile work for the women would be better than their feasting.[183] Jewish customs and Christian customs, even though based in the same law, are presented as oppositions with a clearly assigned hierarchy of good and evil. The fear of being mistaken for a Jew or of keeping Jewish customs is evoked with the help of pejorative descriptions of these customs, a clear assignment of a moral quality to them and, by extension, assertions about both Christians and Jews. This last factor, the formulation in lay didactical books of phrases such as "it would be better for the Jews to work than to feast," casts a light upon the function of "the Jew" in Christian didactics. "The Jew" is an example of evil, and as he is clearly not the addressee of the text, what the Christian layman understands is: if you want to feast on Sundays, you are no better than a Jew.

The moral condemnation of Judaism is also a factor in manuals for confession, with certain mortal sins being compared to the evilness of the Jews, in particular connecting sins against the Fourth Sacrament, Communion, to the ultimate Jewish sin, the killing of Christ: a Christian who receives the Sacrament in the state of mortal sin is worse than the Jews who crucified Christ.[184] Usury and fraudulent trading practices are also identified as sins that both Christians and Jews commit, with the accusation sometimes being made that Christians learned these from the Jews living among them.[185] The lack of moral quality ascribed to the Jew is

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183 "Hyr vmme secht de grote lerer sunte Augustinus. Gesteliken schalt du viren den hilligen dach, ene to hillighende mit geistliken guden werken, mit rouwe dynes geistes in got deme heren. Nicht als de ioden eren sabboth viren mit vnvruchtbaren leddichgande erer ledemate. Leddich willen se wesen van arbeide des lichammes, vnde prisen vnde ouen sik denne meer in andereme quade, als in vnkuusscheyt, in vulheyt, an logenen vnde an anderen ydelen werken. Beter were em to arbeiden de uppe syneme ackere, wen dat he uppe twedracht pinset vnde dencket des hilligen daghes, vnde beter were id dat ere vruwen wulle spunnen vnde ere ander arbeit deden, wen dat se gan to dem dantze edder to ander ydelicheyt desser werlde." Zehn Gebote/Wo ein yslik gud cristen mynsche, fol. 284r.

184 "Hefstu godes licham entfangen vnwerdichliken yn dotliken sunden, so bistu worden eyn dotslegher an deme licham cristi [. . .] Item he ys ergher wen de ioden, de den heren gecruciget hebben. Item he eth unde drynket ouer sick suluen dat ordel der ewighen vordomenisse." Licht der Seelen, fol. 17v–18r.

185 "Derde capittel. Men vindt leyder vil cristen due eyn straflich ind ungotlich regiment fueren. Eyner durch wocher, der ander durch valsche kôffmanschafft, vnd vil meer ander sunden, wilche niet van noden syn tzo verczellen, sulch yr vnschicklich ongeordent leuen

consolidated by the repeated en passant mentioning of Jews accompanied by adjectives such as *quade*, "evil," and *unmylde*, "cruel." As with most anti-Jewish rhetoric, these assertions appear both in translated bestsellers[186] and in anonymous Middle Low German collections,[187] and as a result cannot be labeled as either a more or a less traditional form of discourse.

In the opposition between Christian virtue and Jewish vice, the transition from segregating to demonizing the Jew becomes clearer. The peak of the rhetoric positing the Christian as good and the Jew as evil is reached in texts reflecting upon the Passion of Christ. In the case of the illustrations accompanying the *Arma Christi* poem (a popular poem in the vernacular about the Passion of Christ that includes a circular depiction of the instruments of torture and, in general, a "spitting Jew"), Anthony Bale has shown how a complex story with multiple agents has been reduced to a basic dramatic dichotomy—the super-hero, Christ, and the villain, the Jew.[188] He also points out the dehumanization of the Jews, who are included among the instruments of torture. These mechanisms are also present in many, but not all, Middle Low German texts about the Passion. Many of them are structured around the seven stations on the way of the cross, with every station in the Passion being accompanied by a reference to something evil the Jews did. Both the sacrifice of Christ and Jewish evil are commemorated in the text and in the *imitatio* ritual that the text is meant to encourage.[189] The entire liturgy becomes a commemoration of Jewish vice:

> So alze den vnmilden yoden den heren honsprakeden unde ropen ouer ene crucifige, crutzyge ene. Dar von synge wy cristene deme heren den ymnus den louesanck crux fidelis inter omnes etc.[190]

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kompt meistendeil vff tzweierley sachen [...] wůr jǒden in der cristenheit wǒnen synt sy schadelicher den mynschen dan der duuel." Johannes Pfefferkorn, Ich heyß eyn buchlijn der iuden beicht, fol. 9r–10v.

186 "Ik loue dat he dar na myt sinem vryen willen vth groter leue vor vns arme sundige minschen vangen is geworden van den quaden ioden, vnde alle smaheyt de se em deden leet he myt groter dult alze eyn vnosel lam." Kerstenspiegel, Rostock 1507, fol. 6r.

187 "Betekent dat de vornblindeden ioden do nicht en achteden de schrvfft der profeten unde de rechticheyt, men uth torneschem hate vullenbrachten se eren bǒsen willen an deme heren." Speygel der Leyen, fol. 38v.

188 Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, 158.

189 "So alze de here van den ioden is to dren tyden alder lasterliken bespottet, so ambede wy dat crutze, alze den heren an deme crutze in dem stillen vridaghe drye so alzemen dat crutze upheuet [...]" Speygel der Leyen, fol. 38v.

190 Ibid.

> [And then the fierce Jews mocked the Lord and screamed, "Crucifige, that is, crucify him" at him. Because of that we Christians sing the Lord the hymn and canticle of praise *crux fidelis inter omnes*.]

The importance of the late medieval Passion-related devotional texts in laying the groundwork for anti-Jewish propaganda is hard to neglect, even though texts such as the *Imitatio Christi*, with its claim to dwell in the sacred wounds of Christ, did not themselves include anti-Jewish stereotypes, just as not all painted and carved stations of the cross in European churches included images of evil Jews.[191] The popularity of the topic of the Passion in itself, the number of texts addressing this topic and the easy access to images, plays and texts about the Passion that did include anti-Jewish stereotypes close the gap between explicit and implicit anti-Jewish biases in Passion-related material. The vicious and obvious anti-Semitism of many of the popular Passion plays has been noted, but the problem goes beyond the plays and their annual performance: Christian readers were encouraged to contemplate the Passion as often as possible, and even though some texts did not stress the supposed guilt of the Jews in the process, the majority of texts available presented two-sided liturgy and contemplation techniques that focused on the heroic sacrifice of Christ and the viciousness of his antagonists. As is the case with the opposition between Christian and Jewish customs, the assignment of moral qualities to Jewish people collectively only works because of the contradiction between Christian and Jewish people.

Doernenkrantz van Collen offers a formulation of the Christian-Jew opposition that is even more rigorous in moral terms, constantly referring to the Christian pole as *gheystlike mynsche*, spiritual people. Structured around three books on the three estates of humankind, it devotes the first book to the "spiritual people" or the clergy, beginning with a retelling of the Passion of Christ. As usual in the Passion stories, the Jew is the villain and, based on nothing more than pure evil, strives to betray and kill Jesus. The spiritual people, i.e. either the clergy or all Christians who struggle to live a spiritual life, appear even more virtuous in contrast to the evil Jews. *Doernenkrantz van Collen* is a text that is particularly consistent in presenting anti-Jewish interpretations of each step in the Passion of Christ, combining each with either a devotional exercise for Christians or a proposed visit to one of the numerous Cologne churches. The recurrent

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[191] Jordan, William C. "The Erosion of the Stereotype of the Last Tormentor of Christ." *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series* 81, no. 1/2 (1990): 26–27.

anti-Jewish theme that runs through the chapter is visually reinforced: almost every paragraph begins with *de ioden*. The paragraphs are separated from each other with short black or red dashes, and the first line of each begins with a red letter, so that the basic message will be clear to even casual readers: the Jew is the opposite of the spiritual Christian.

Jewishness as a moral quality is referred to on several occasions, with the author asking each Christian to consider whether or not he is one of the enemies of Christ:

> Hye mach eyn Innich mynsche synen stayt und grat besynnen uff he eyner sy van desen die Cristum soichten, want hye waren der ouersten dyener der joedscher synagogen. Hye was der verreder Judas. Hye waren van den gemeynen der joeden.[192]
>
> [Here each heartfelt human shall contemplate his order and state, whether he might be one of those who were pursuing Christ, as here were the highest servants of the Jewish synagogue. Here was the traitor Judas. Here were many of the common Jews.]

The specific textual ambivalence as to whether the term spiritual people is synonymous to the clergy or constitutes an admonition or goal for all Christians adds a certain depth to the Jew-spiritual Christian opposition. The same phenomenon occurs in the medieval fables, where the vernacular adaptations of Latin model texts sometimes concoct an anti-Jewish interpretation and commentary, while at other times neglecting one that is explicit. A Latin prose commentary on the *Anonymus Neveleti* fable 37, *De musca et formica*, explains the moral sense of the story as the *musca* being the Jews, who believe their law to be right and live according to it, all the while making fun of the "spiritual people." As a consequence, the Jews and many converted Christians live happy lives, but the Last Judgment will show that they are actually dead and living in Gehenna.[193]

With a randomness that resembles the way that German adaptations of Latin fable collections from the Aesopian tradition took up or omitted the anti-Jewish commentaries found in Latin model texts, lay didactical literature made haphazard use of a pejorative connection between the Old

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[192] Doernenkrantz, fol. 6v.

[193] "Moraliter per muscam intellige Iudeos, qui credunt legem eorum esse beatam et illa que faciunt. Sed per formicam spirituales homines designantur, qui sepius ab illis deridentur. Per estatem intelligenda est vita huius seculi, in qua Iudei et mutit conuersi Christiani deliciose viuunt. Sed yems, id est diabolus uel dies iudicii, opprimit eos morte et viuunt in iehenna." Codex Guelferbytanus Helm. 185, cit. after Martin, *Representations of Jews*, 159.

Testament and the Jews. In the case of the fables, the moral and spiritual connection between disgusting or frightening animals and Jews is common and follows well-established cultural patterns of anti-Jewish resentment, but it is not a mandatory quality.[194] In catechetical literature, biblical texts can either serve as evidence for the blindness and the evilness of the Jew or bear witness to Judaism and Christianity's common basis. Alongside the description of the liturgical commemoration of Christ's death and the related evilness of the Jew, *Speyghel der Leyen* mentions incidents from the Old Testament that must be commemorated:

> Betekent de grote woldaet de god dede in der olden ee by den ioden. Dat he en luchte des nachtes alze eyne sule des vůres so ghinck he vor en do he se hadde ghebracht uth egypten, unde des daghes alze eine schinende wolke. Betekent ock dat he in der staltnisse des vůres unde des blyvems deme suluen yodeschen volke ghaff de teyn ghebode.[195]
>
> [Remember the great blessing that God rendered unto the Jews in the Old Testament. That he glowed in the night like a column of fire, as he walked in front of them when he took them out of Egypt, and in the day as a shining cloud. Remember also that he, in the shape of the fire and the smoke, gave the Ten Commandments to the same Jewish people.]

Sometimes the references to the Old Testament open the way for a depiction of the people of Israel as the good ones, who parallel contemporary Christians in some ways, but in most other cases, the people of Israel are the unwilling and evil Jews who have access to the truth, but cannot recognize and acknowledge it. Israel may be presented as the historical and eschatological predecessor of Christianity in an ongoing chronology that describes God and his people, or Israel may be Christianity's typological and moral antipode; God has blessed the people of Israel with numerous miracles, has led them out of captivity in Egypt and has delivered them the Decalogue.

The limited number of explicit or implicit textual examples of the position of the Jew in society being expressed as an opposition between Christian and Jew, with the Christian as the implicit "other" of the Jew, stands in contrast to the numerous cases of Jews and pagans being grouped together as an oppositional pole. Despite the obvious opposition between the Christian population, its privileges and rights, and the Jewish population,

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[194] Martin, *Representations of Jews*, 170.
[195] Speygel der Leyen, fol. 9r–9v.

its constant fear of pogroms, taxes and deportations, there are only a few texts in the corpus that work with an actual rhetorical opposition between these two groups or, rather, with an image of these two groups. Christian-Jew does not work as a binomial of its own, and only appears occasionally in combination with other binomials. Instead, the basic need for a distinction between Christians and the others is more often expressed in the Christians-Jews-pagans triad.[196]

V.8 *"Ioden unde heyden"*

Jews and pagans in Middle Low German didactical literature constitute a well-known binomial, representing everything that lies outside of Christian society. It is also a binomial that is only meaningful in the context of the Christian matrix: the binomial encompasses a number of different religious and social groups that are conceived as Christianity's other, and unless one is conscious of this aspect, the binomial does not make sense. It does not appear in urban legal texts, but is frequently used in canon law and scholastic writings on questions of Christian authority over non-Christians, thereby also addressing debates within Christianity about authority, the range of papal power and so on.[197] In this context, however, the binomials "pagans and heretics," "heretics and schismatics" or "pagans and non-believers" also frequently appear.[198] Regarding the coexistence of Christians and non-Christians, the triple formula of *Iudaeis, Sarracenis vel paganis* or *Iudaeis, haereticis vel paganis* is used.[199] In Middle Low German didactical literature, these formulas are taken from the Latin,

[196] This corresponds to the rhetorical strategies and goals of, for example, the sermons of Henry of Langenstein: he argued for a conversion of Jews on the basis of a concern for their spiritual well-being, not as a sign of the *ecclesia militans*, thereby disconnecting the question of Jewish faith and conversion from the issue of Christian-Jewish coexistence. Knapp, Fritz P. "Gestörte oder verhinderte Religionsgespräche: Das Judentum der mittelalterlichen Diaspora aus der Sicht Peter Abaelards und Heinrichs von Langenstein." In *Norm und Krise von Kommunikation: Inszenierungen literarischer und sozialer Interaktion im Mittelalter*. Ed. by Alois Hahn, 55–72. Münster: LIT-Verl., 2006, ibid., 63.

[197] Cf. the examples from papal bullae and the *Decretum Gratiani* in Brand-Pierach, Sandra. "Ungläubige im Kirchenrecht: die kanonistische Behandlung der Nichtchristen als symbolische Manifestation politischen Machtwillens." Konstanz: Univ., Diss. 2004, 83, 105.

[198] Cf. on this complex Becker, Hans-Jürgen. "Die Stellung des kanonischen Rechts zu den Andersgläubigen: Heiden, Juden und Ketzer." In *Wechselseitige Wahrnehmung der Religionen im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*. Ed. by Ludger Grenzmann, 101–124. Berlin, New York, NY: de Gruyter, 2009.

[199] Gregorius IX. "Decretalium liber IX, titulus VI. De iudaeis, sarracenis, et eorum servis. Cap. XVIII. Iudaei vel pagani publicis officiis praeficiendi non sunt." *CIC* I, 771–772.

with modifications regarding the Muslims in particular: they are almost never introduced into the binomials or the triple formula regarding Jews and non-believers. The striking difference between learned discourse on non-Christians and its adaptation in didactical texts in the German vernaculars has also been observed in the case of older Early High German texts. Timothy Jackson found authors such as Berthold von Regensburg surprisingly unsophisticated regarding Muslim beliefs and differences between Islam and polytheistic religions.[200] In the case of Middle Low German texts, this ignorance extends to a general neglect of Muslims in the formula used for non-Christians. It is unclear why Middle Low German didactical literature usually subsumed the Muslims into the "Jews and pagans" formula; as Jews and pagans were almost equally distant from the daily life of the average inhabitant of Lübeck or Magdeburg, an adaptation to existing circumstances is an unlikely explanation. It is more relevant that the formulas regarding non-believers do not, as is the case with most other binomials denoting social groups, derive from urban legal and regulatory texts in the vernacular, but from a learned discourse. Obviously different rules are at play when referencing the latter.

However, Muslims are explicitly mentioned in a few exceptional cases. One example is a quotation from the beginning of the treatise *Bewährung, dass die Juden irren*, dealing with the non-believers in general: nowadays, it says, there are many people in the world who do not believe in Jesus Christ such as Jews, pagans, Turks and many others. Still, each of them believes that he possesses the true belief. The conclusion drawn is interesting and unexpected in an anti-Jewish treatise. Christians should not marvel at this or to be irritated by it: they should simply see the existence of non-believers as one more reason to thank God for not having been born as one of them.[201] Medieval reality contradicts the text, however, given the numerous occasions on which Christians were indeed irritated and acted on that irritation.

The general need to convert non-believers and the role every good Christian should play in this is pointed out in the catechetical compilation *Licht der Seelen*, with the same list of non-believers as in the aforementioned anti-Jewish treatise: If your faith was so great that you were able to

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[200] Jackson, Timothy R. "'Cristen, ketzer, heiden, jüden': questions of identity in the Middle Ages." In *Encounters with Islam in German literature and culture*. Ed. by James R. Hodkinson and Jeffrey Morrison, 19–35. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009.

[201] Bewährung, fol. 6r.

bring all pagans, Jews, Turks and heretics to the faith, you would still not be on the path to salvation if you failed to confess your mortal sins and do penance for them.[202] The list of non-believers and those with false beliefs was used in order to dramatize the need for confession and contrition in order to achieve salvation, while at the same time keeping the ultimate goal in sight: eventually converting all of them to Christianity.

These two texts represent the very few examples in which Muslims are mentioned alongside Jews and pagans. The combination Jew-pagan is much more popular, and its ideological function is easy to decode: the relationship between the religions, the ambiguous position of Jews in Christian theology and propaganda, the attempts to target Jews in Inquisition proceedings aimed at heretics—all of these factors were probably better expressed by combining Jews with other groups seen as socially or religiously deviant.

In the canon law *Summa to dude*, a number of paragraphs address the coexistence of Christians and Jews, with the general tendency being to segregate their living spheres, but not to encourage violence.[203] In the Middle Low German adaptation of the text, most of these rules are formulated as applying to both Jews and pagans, with considerable use made of the *Ioden unde heyden* binomial: both can be forced to listen to sermons in an effort to convert them, but they cannot be forced to convert, and their children cannot be baptized without their consent.[204] Christians should not live with pagans or Jews, befriend them or have business dealings with them, unless their faith is so strong that there is no risk that they will desert Christianity and convert to another religion.[205]

Ioden unde heyden, even though they appear side by side in all these regulations, held very different places in the daily life of the Hanseatic urban populations. The Jewish religion, as mentioned above, posed serious difficulties for Christian theology. Pagans, on the other hand, were distant

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202 "Item haddestu sulken groten ghelouen dattu tho deme cristene ghelouen kondest brynghen alle heyden ioden torken, unde ketter, bistu in dotliken sunden brynghestu dy nicht erst to gode myt ener warer bicht ruwe unde leyde, so bist du nicht up deme weghe der salicheyt." Licht der Seelen, fol. 8v.

203 Cf. Becker, "Die Stellung des kanonischen Rechts," 103.

204 "Wo men ioden unde heyden bringen schal tho deme louen, capit. i [...] Wo men der ioden unde heiden kinder dopen mach, cap. ij [...] Wo men ioden unde heyden miden scal edder nicht, cap. iij." Summa to dude, letter I, chapters 1–3.

205 "Ok de starke cristene geloue hebbe de mogen in noet saken mit ioden unde heyden meynschop hebben men se scullen nenen woker mit on hebben. Men eintvoldige lude de schullen nicht mit one vele meynschop hebben van dem to vorchtende were dat se van oere vorkert mochte werde." Ibid., chapter 3.

and posed little problem: they existed primarily in propaganda supporting the Crusades and in religious texts on conversion. They did not live among the Christians, and most frontier struggles in Prussia and Lithuania had come to an end decades earlier. A possible explanation for the popularity of the pagan as an antagonistic figure is that the pagan serves to reduce the complexity and the ambiguity of the Jew in the Christian imagination: when they are placed side by side, the Jew becomes nothing more than a religiously deviant barbarian, an object of either violence or pity, and not a representative of innumerable problems related to Scripture, prophesies and the nature of Christ's sacrifice for mankind.

There are, however, a few exceptions: the potential for Jews to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah distinguishes them from the pagans. While most of the literature on the Passion of Christ is, as has been shown, generally anti-Jewish, thereby simplifying biblical narratives, the Lübeck text *Van der martere vnses heren ihesu christi an den hilligen guden vridage in der marter weken* makes a distinction:

> Dat drudde deel vnder stucke der hilligen passien is, dar na als ihesus mit valschem gerichte verordelt was, wo he do wart an dat kruce gehangen [...] dar na als ihesus xpc vnse here an dem kruce was gestoruen, wo he do van een deel ioden vnde heiden smeliken wart gehandelt, vnde dar na van etliken rechten vramen ioden erliken van dem kruce wart genamen vnde lofflik to dem graue brocht.[206]
>
> [The third part of the Holy Passion is, when after this Jesus was doomed by a false trial, when he was hung upon the cross ... after this, Jesus Christ our Lord died on the cross, where he was treated painfully by some Jews and pagans, and after that he was taken from the cross, by many righteous pious Jews and laudably carried to the grave.]

What makes the Jews righteous is their acknowledgment of Christ, expressed by their worship of Christ's body. In contrast to most other Passion narratives, this one does not mention the pagan who was hanging on the cross beside Jesus and who was saved for believing in him as a counterpart to the Jews who killed him, in order to establish a hierarchy of evil between Jews and pagans. *Van der martere vnses heren* mentions instead the Jews who took him down from the cross—the question arises as to whether these Jews, St. John the Apostle, the Virgin Mary and St. Mary Magdalene, should not have been counted as Christians by that point. Instead, the fact that they are Jews is stressed, and thereby so is the

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[206] Passio Christi/Van der martere vnses heren, fol. 3r.

fact that Christ himself emanated from the people of Israel, indicating the potential for Jews to be righteous and embrace Christian ethics, in contrast to the pagans. This argument, of course, leads in the long run to an even stricter damnation of medieval Jews.

The *Ioden unde heyden* binomial is also used as a reminder of the historical period when Jews and pagans—in this case, Romans—ruled over Christians, and those of the Christian faith were forced to be conspiratorial or to embrace martyrdom. A 1493 Magdeburg explanation of the Credo (based on an Augsburg version) mentions this historical period, as well as referring to the joy every Christian should feel when observing other religions and comparing the miracles and signs God has granted to the Christian religion in order to prove its supremacy.[207] *Ioden unde heyden* were the oppressors of Christian believers, and in order to remember this period, the confession of the creed is said aloud and targets both the historical enemies of Christianity and its contemporary opponents, the heretics. The historical antitype of the Jews and pagans, who killed the apostles because of their faith, is placed parallel to the contemporary example, the heretics, who are being killed by Christians because of their faith. This inconsistency in the antitypic relationship is not, however, addressed in the text. Instead, the consistency of the *ecclesia militans* from Roman times onward is stressed in the continuity of liturgy and prayer.

The memory of times when Christians were oppressed because of their faith is also used in other catechetical texts, with the *Ioden unde heyden* formula a consistent feature. In this regard, the First Commandment is a common point of reference, with "those who help Jews and pagans with the things they use to persecute the Christians" being mentioned as sinners against the Commandment.[208] Given that the Decalogue, particularly the commandment to have but one God, is the most basic and most crucial

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[207] "Do de geloue van den twelff apostelen wart gemaket, Do dorfte des nymant apenbaer bekennen in der werld sunder unse hilge geloue was bedwungen van den ioden unde heiden. Hyrumme to eyner gedechtnisse, so sprickt man ohne heymlick Auer sed der dat men schale wedder de ketterye apenbaer ropen." Auslegung des Glaubens/Hyr heuet sick an eyne schone vthlegginge, fol. 5v. "Ock wenne segen dat an de ioden unde wenne betrachte den ed de heyden wo sekerlyck dat wy leuen in unserm gelouen, wy mogen doch stan vor den ogen godes unde mogen sprecken here synt wy bedrogen, so hefstu nu unsen gelouen mit sodanen wunderwerken unde tekenen betuget." Ibid., fol. 2v.

[208] "Die den yoeden off heiden yenich bystant doen, daer se die kerstene mede veruolgen." Zehn Gebote/Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet, fol. 3r. "De den ioden edder den heyden yenigen bistant doen, dar se de cristene mede vordrucken." Spegel des cristene mynschen, Lübeck 1501, fol. 3v.

aspect of Jewish and Christian commonality, the *ioden unde heyden* formula is fatally flawed in this context. It denies the common ground shared by Judaism and Christianity, and thereby one of the foremost arguments against pogroms and expulsion of Jews from Christian communities. This might be the result of ignorance about the distinctions between monotheism and polytheism, but it is more likely a conscious projection of "false" practices regarding questions of faith onto both Jews and pagans.

Frequently and paradoxically, the Jewish faith is considered less monotheistic than the Christian faith, as is the case in the Middle Low German adaptation of Ludolf of Göttingen's *Speyghel des kersten ghelouen*.

> Teghen dyt erste ghebod doen de heiden, yoden unde quade cristen. De heyden doen dartegen, want se god nicht anbeden [...] Ok so breken de yoden dyt bot godes, want al is sake, dat se louen an eynen god, de alle ding ghemaket unde gheshapen heft [...] want se louen nicht, dat got mynsche gheworden is, unde gheboren van der reynen maget marien. Vort so breken de quaden cristen dat bod, unde alle devenne, de houerdich, unkusch unde gyrich synt van leuende.[209]
>
> [Sinners against the First Commandment are the pagans, Jews and evil Christians. The pagans sin against it, because they do not pray to God ... and the Jews break this law, even though it is true that they believe in the one God, who has created and made all things ... but they do not believe that God has become human, and was born of the pure servant Mary. And then the evil Christians break the law, and all those who are proud, unchaste and greedy in their lives.]

Here the Jew-pagan binomial is explicitly complemented with its implicit third: the Christians, in this case, the evil Christians who are on the wrong side of the line separating good from evil. It seems that the Jew-pagan-Christian formula is used to explain one of the obviously illogical articles of dogma in the Christian faith: the mystery of the Trinitarian God, who is simultaneously one person and three, and who nonetheless does not violate the monotheistic principle. By explaining that Jews do not believe in the humanity of God, in a dialectical twist the Trinitarian God is presented as the most profound representation of monotheism, as opposed to Judaism's unitary God. Pagans, on the other hand, fulfil a different function in this triad: claiming that they by definition violate the First Commandment amounts to saying that the Decalogue encompasses all

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[209] Speyghel des kersten ghelouen, fol. 60v–61r, cit. after Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 91–92.

humans regardless of their religion. Not belonging to Christian religion is a crime against the Catholic Church, even for those who do not know of the Church's laws.

Not surprisingly, the Christian religion is considered superior to other religions in didactical texts, and these other religions exist mainly to reassure the Christian of his supremacy—this assumption shapes the Christian-Jew-pagan triad in lay didactical literature. The crucial question of salvation is ordered within Christianity on the basis of a hierarchy of virtues, but baptism and a firm adherence to the Christian religion are the basic requirements for salvation. In this triad, not acknowledging Christ as the Messiah is considered as bad as having more than one God. At the same time, all human beings will be obliged to justify themselves at the Last Judgment. The rhymed *Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden sele* uses the Christian-Jew-pagan triad as a description that is synonymous with "all those who were ever born," all of whom will face the Last Judgment, when they will be "bitterly differentiated."[210] Here the supremacy of the Christians is not explained: members of all three religious groups will be differentiated—probably based on their respective spiritual virtues and on whether it was possible for them to have recognized Christ as the Savior—but the context of the triad leaves open the question of how. Christians must fear damnation as well and, consequently, Jews and pagans can in principle also be saved.

Often the Jew-pagan-heretic triad is used in order to point out the specific grade of vice in a certain deed or sin, as in *Licht der Seelen* when the sins against the five senses are explained.

> Because the mindful people do not drink any more than they need to. Pagans, Jews and heretics do not do this either, nor even the devils.[211]

The connection between Christian virtue and Jewish and pagan vice—and, to provide extra punch, that of the devils—might constitute a rhetorical strategy for pointing out the dangers of drunkenness, but it also establishes a descending hierarchy of humanity: Christians, pagans, Jews, heretics, devils, and sinful (drunken) Christians. Considering the prevalence

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[210] "Cristen ioden vnde heyden / so wert gar eyn bitter scheyden / allent dat dar ye wart geboren." Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen, fol. 2r.

[211] "Wente de vnvornuftighen dere drincken nicht mer wen en not is. Ock don des de heyden, ioden, edder ketther nicht, de duuele don ock des nicht." Licht der Seelen, fol. 13r.

of advice against drunkenness in religious texts, on the one hand, and the potential frequency of real life drunkenness, on the other hand, using this list to augment the argument seems a bit out of proportion. Still, the nonchalant attitude with which non-believers are assigned a subhuman status is striking.

While Christian-Jew obviously does not function as a binomial, Jew-pagan does: it simultaneously refers to all non-Christians and to Christian society. *Ioden unde heyden* is a formula frequently used in canon law and in catechetical and devotional texts, both those drawing on a High German original and those originally written in Middle Low German. The frequency of the formula shows that its use is not connected to any phenomenon based on daily life, especially not to groups of people actually present in late medieval urban life. The binomial is used both in the towns with Jewish communities and in those without, and it is unlikely that the majority of the urban populations had ever seen a living pagan. The *ioden unde heyden* formula denies that any of these groups were ever part of society: it simply denies Jews a place in society. The binomial's extra layer of meaning, and thereby its implicit third part, derives from the matrix in which it is used: Christian society defines its other. Additionally, the equation of Jews and pagans helps to resolve several theological difficulties: the concept of a Trinitarian God based on the monotheistic law, the Decalogue as the common ground of Jews and Christians and the general question of why Jews live under constant threat in Christian societies, although they did nothing but help Christ to fulfil his planned self-sacrifice. In spite of the importance that propaganda supporting the Crusades, for example, puts on the question of conversion of pagans as a means of fulfilling God's will and law, the possibility of Jews converting is barely touched upon. In the context of the Crusades, the frequent use of the *ioden unde heyden* formula also serves to sanction pogroms against Jews, which are forbidden by canon law, either as a way of forcing conversion or as a legitimate way of segregating the living spheres of the Christians and the other.

The Crusades and their role in legitimizing the killing and forced conversion of people of other religions constitute one discursive framework from which the *ioden unde heyden* binomial draws its meaning; another framework is the anti-Jewish literature that presents a construct of the Jews as a threat to Christians—not only their rites and beliefs, but also their very lives, ranging from blood libels to ritual murders. Imagining that Jews want to kill Christians, along with the idea that the Talmud would sanction Jews killing all Christians, was an extreme form of

anti-Judaism that was particularly prominent in the sermons of Franciscans, a fifteenth-century example being John of Capestrano who preached in the German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire in 1451–56. It was he who introduced the epithet "worse than pagans" to describe the Jews.[212]

When used in catechetical texts to identify the enemies of Christianity, the binomial combines this concept with a third textual and historical tradition, namely, the lives of the martyrs. The binomial refers back to a historical period when Christians actually were persecuted, not by Jews, but by the Roman emperors or later in the frontier regions of the mission. Introducing the martyrs of the past (who died at the hands of pagans) in connection with the contemporary issue of cohabitation with Jews merges Jews and pagans into an entity of enemies of the *ecclesia militans*. The few instances where *heyden unde ioden* is combined with "evil Christians" consolidates the eschatological context within which the Church needs to fight in order to survive and to fulfil God's plan, taking it to a more concrete level, with the enemies of Christianity also being the enemies of each individual Christian and an obvious threat. The definition of people who commit certain sins—such as drunkenness and usury—as "worse than Jews and pagans" points to the importance the construct of the "other" has for Christian society: it is necessary to draw boundaries that demarcate those who are obviously different. Jews have not yet become, as is the case in the debates in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the "other" that hides through assimilation: they are a visible "other" that the Christians have managed to exclude from their society to the highest degree possible. At the same time, the Jew serves to illustrate the danger every Christian faces, the risk of falling from grace and thereby falling outside of society's boundaries. The internal enemy of society is not yet the Jew, but the sinful Christian, who can already be compared to the Jew in terms of moral dysfunction.

Considering these functions, the *ioden unde heyden* binomial must be seen as a much more effective metaphor for the boundaries of society than the Christian-Jew opposition would be, and this in turn explains why the actual opposition is not expressed in a linguistic opposition: Christian and Jew as a binomial points too obviously to the common ground shared by the two groups, to theological inconsistencies and to a history of religious dialogue and aborted dialogue stretching back several hundred years. The

[212] Schulze, "wan ir unhail," 126–127.

dialectic relationship between the two poles of the binomial would bring Jews and Christians closer together than might be comprehensible within the framework of lay didactical literature. The use of the Jew-pagan binomial serves to instead bring those two groups together in a conglomerate of imagined anti-Christian forces. The connection to the distant pagan makes it easier on a semantic level to deprive the nearby Jew of much of his humanity.

However, the Jew-pagan binomial is not only used to express anti-Jewish resentment. In the exempla genre in particular, Jews and pagans do not always appear on the same level, with the opposition instead implying a clear hierarchy in which Jews constitute the superior pole and pagans the inferior: they are often placed in a biblical-historical surrounding in the time before Christ's birth, and thereby the Christian need not appear as the superior third in the formulation. These examples of a nuanced view about Judaism and instances of positive imagery are rare, but they point to the possibility of a general acknowledgement of the common ground shared by Judaism and Christianity in the genre of lay didactical literature.

In the catechetical summa *Speghel der sammiticheit*, biblical examples of Jewish martyrdom are addressed. The seven Maccabees and their mother were, according to the apocryphal Book of Maccabees, killed by King Antiochus because they refused to eat pork and thereby placed obedience to God above their own lives. The Middle Low German text calls them "the seven Jewish brothers, whom king Antiochus let be killed because they did not want to break the law of God and eat pork." The opposition between the righteous Jews and the pagan king is also pointed out: "God heard them according to their soul, and he gave them the consolation of the eternal life afterwards, and he gave the pagan king even bigger pains in hell."[213] The story about the martyrdom of the brothers derives from 2 Mcc 7, and it played a substantial role in shaping Christian martyrdom narratives. The Maccabean brothers are also a rare example of Jewish martyrs being venerated as Christian saints, both in Orthodox and Roman confession. In the Middle Low German region, they were probably best known in connection with their sanctuary in Cologne: in 1184, the

[213] "De vij iodeschen broder, de anthiochus de heydensche koning doden leet, dar vmme dat se de ee godes nicht breken wolden vnde eten swynevlesch, de horede god nach der sele, vnde ghaff en alto hand troest des ewighen leuendes vnde deme konighe duste meer pyne der vordoemnisse, secundi machabeorum in deme vij cap." Speghel der Sammitticheit, fol. 45v–46r.

St. Andreas Church received relics of the Holy Maccabees, which were kept in a large golden shrine in the church. As well, a Benedictine monastery in Cologne had the Maccabean brothers as their patron saints.[214] Conveniently, these relics and sanctuaries go unmentioned among the spiritual sightseeing highlights in the town in the explicitly anti-Jewish *Doernenkrantz van Collen*. A sixteenth-century book from Cologne, *Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen*, also deals with the legend.[215] It is doubtful that the publication of this book reflected an explicit pro-Jewish attitude, however: one year later, the same printer produced the first edition of Johannes Pfefferkorn's strident treatise *Der ioden bicht*.[216]

The story of the three young men in the fiery furnace in the Book of Daniel is a similarly positive example of Jewish faith that became popular in Christian art and liturgy. This story can also be found in the exempla collection *Spegel der sammiticheyt* as an example of the success one might achieve through devout prayer.[217] The men in the Bible named Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do not become martyrs; instead, an angel saves them from execution and God appears before the Babylonian King Nabuchadnezar.

These two exempla of righteous Jews, appearing in an anonymous Lübeck collection from 1478, are also examples of an acknowledgement of the Byzantine tradition, since both the Maccabean brothers and the men in the fiery furnace have a feast day and a liturgical presence in the Eastern Church. In general, it can be said that a focus in these texts on Old Testament Scripture considerably changes the depiction of the Jew. The Middle Low German version of the *Seelentrost* includes numerous exempla taken from the Old Testament in order to explain the Decalogue, and here the Jew-pagan opposition clearly serves to establish that the Jew is closer to the Christian.

The First Commandment exempla show Christian theology's ambivalence towards Judaism. They also address the aforementioned opposition

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214 Barcellona, Francesco Scorza. "Makkabäische Brüder." *LexMA* VI, 155–156.

215 Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen. Köln: Johann Landen, 1507. BC 418, VD16 L 7734.

216 Reske, *Buchdrucker*, 426, on Johann Landen. He does not connect the production of these two texts to any ideological precept on the printer's part, but focuses on Johann Landen's opposition to the censorship of book printers proclaimed by the Pope.

217 "De dre ioden in deme gloghighen ouen entwadede he na deme corpus, vnde bewisede sik dar gharwunderlyk vor deme koninghe nabugodonosor. Danielis in deme iij. cap., alzo dat de koning sach, dat he ne nichtes vormochte yeghen god. Dat ropet vnses innighen bedes horet god aldermeyst." Speghel der Sammitticheit, fol. 45v–46r.

between the Jew and the "spiritual people,"[218] since the exempla from the Old Testament—mainly the Book of Daniel—are followed by exempla about nuns, spiritual women in general, a bishop and several priests. The exempla from the Old Testament are stories about the people of Israel turning away from monotheism or about the Babylonian kings. The introduction takes a different tone than that found in catechetical advice, where Jews are said to break the First Commandment because of their disbelief in the Trinitarian God:

> Tzo dem ersten mal mynsche du ensalt dy mit geynygher creaturen vereynighen inde vor einen got an beden also dey heyden deden dey de sunne aenbeden, ader den maen eder de sternen of den donre of de boyme of de steyne of bylde. Dat misshaget gode sere dat hait hey wol bewiset an dem iuitschen volcke.[219]
>
> [First of all, man, you shall not unite with any creature or worship it as a God, as the pagans do who worship the sun, or the moon or the stars or the thunder or the trees or the stones or images. This is very displeasing to God, which he has proved well with the Jewish people.]

The first example addresses the escape from Egypt and God's help in the desert, then the worship of the golden calf and Moses' anger, and finally the seizure of the land of Canaan and its division in the kingdoms of Israel and Juda. The benefices and graces of God are constantly contrasted, with the virtuous Jews, on the one hand, counterposed to the worship of images and idols, on the other hand. The next chapter of the Middle Low German *Seelentrost* (p. 8–10) tells the story about the three men in the fiery furnace, with the focus, in this case, on their refusal to worship the golden idol made by King Nebuchadnezzar and the men's song of praise after they are saved by the angel. This song—*Benedictus es domine Deus patrum nostrorum*—is presented as the liturgy for all Sundays during the Fast. Another song from the Book of Daniel, *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino*, is also presented as part of the mass liturgy for every Sunday. *Seelentrost* gives a full translation, embedded in the story of the three men in the fiery furnace, and even though the text does not mention a feast day for the three as Catholic martyrs, the connection between this story and the liturgy is nonetheless an example of catechetical literature that explains parts of the liturgy as commemorating God's grace to the people of Israel and, in this case, also to righteous Jews.

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[218] Cf. the chapter above about Christians and Jews.
[219] Seelentrost, p. 6.

The exempla for the Fifth Commandment also use the Jew-pagan opposition in a way that favors the Jew. A lengthy chapter deals with the birth of Moses, including the pharaoh's attempt to kill all Jewish male children. The chapter starts:

> Van konynck pharao vnd dem ysrahelyschen volck. Got hadde vyß alle der werlt ein volch vußkoren dat heisch dat ysrahelysche volck dat waren de yoden.[220]
>
> [About king pharaoh and the people of Israel. God had chosen among the entire world a people, which was called the people of Israel, these were the Jews.]

The general acknowledgement of the people of Israel as the chosen people and the recipients of God's grace in the time of the Old Testament does not necessarily indicate an essential break with anti-Jewish resentment—after all, the fundamental crime of the Jews in Christian imagination was not their existence as such, but the killing of Christ and the refusal to accept him as their Messiah. Accordingly, what they did or did not do before Christ's birth was probably seen as of limited importance with regard to the treatment of contemporary Jews. Still, both on the level of theological discourse and on the level of lay didactical literature, the exempla of righteous Jews, the veneration of Old Testament saints and martyrs and presenting liturgy as a commemoration of the state of grace the Jews were in indicate an important fact: despite the numerous pogroms, the expulsion of Jews from almost all German towns and the fierce anti-Jewish propaganda, there were still remnants of the original ambiguity about the Jewish-Christian relationship, and in some cases this was acknowledged in lay didactical literature. The function of the Jews as witnesses of the covenant, their initial status as God's chosen people and the Decalogue's role as the most prominent principle of faith shared by Jews and Christians were aspects of the relationship that had inspired the often ignored canon law recommendation to steer clear of Jews, but to leave them in peace and, by all means, not to kill them. That this relationship was expressed with the Jew-pagan binomial as well, even if only very occasionally, proves that rhetorical forms by themselves are not ideologically or discursively specific: the context determines their significance.

The difficulty that Christians still had in the fifteenth century in defining the proper treatment of Jews and in integrating canonical restraint

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220 Seelentrost, p. 143.

and pogrom propaganda is expressed in the almost constant use of the "Jews and pagans" binomial instead of a "Jews and Christians" binomial. By formulating most of the catechetical advice within the matrix of Jews and pagans, the gap between Jews and Christians is emphasized rather than the dialectical relationship within the binomial. With the occasional complement of "evil Christians," the distinction between the target public for catechetical advice and the "others" becomes even clearer: not following Christian laws and especially the Catholic Church's Commandments placed all people, baptized or circumcised or neither, in a group of morally deviant others. This pool of supposed evilness and the various vices ascribed to it were drawn from different textual traditions; Crusade ideology, anti-Jewish sermons, and sermons against usury, all of which were popular throughout the Middle Ages and obviously remained valid even when pagans and Jews had disappeared from northern German urban daily life entirely. The signifiers for the outside of Christian society indeed flourished without their signified—which is true for both Jews and pagans.

V.9 *Rich and Poor, Man and Woman, Jew and Pagan: The Combination of Binomials*

Several specific functions of binomials as social images have by now become evident: the division of social groups based on different principles; the potential to conceive of the relationship between these as a firm line or as a smooth transition; the intimate connection between the poles and simultaneous strong sense of hierarchy; and binomials demarcating and encompassing both the inside and the outside of Christian society. The fact that each of the binomials used can also appear in various remarkably popular combinations of several binomials makes some comparative thought about them necessary.

A basic issue surrounding all binomials would seem to be the question of whether in combination they create an extra layer of meaning. As an example, scholars analyzing medieval urban legal texts have assigned the *arm und reich* binomial a special status related to political groups and as a formula for legitimizing the political order in the sense of "everybody" or "all of us," encompassing the urban community as one rooted in the community of oath. *Arm und reich* does not denote clear and measurable economic wealth, but rather groups with and without political influence in the urban community, on the one hand, and the basic equality

of all humankind under God's law, on the other hand.[221] This is, as such, an example of an extra layer of meaning in the binomial that cannot be detected from the meaning of each of its components alone. The same principles of complementarity and legitimization are found in other oppositions and, in these cases as well, normative sources provide models with different outcomes regarding the question of equality. "Man and woman" often occurs in the context of economic issues within the family—and thus in the area of secular law—or regarding rules for female organization in the guilds. In these cases, the mention of man and woman indicates a certain type of law that explicitly applies to both genders, and not to their (non-existent) overall juridical equality. However, the combination of different twin formulas usually means that a law is meant to be applied to everyone in the town, or that a person holding an office is required to serve everyone; for example, the person who oversees "everyone's" coins in order to eliminate forgeries.[222] The binomials thus transcend their pure rhetorical function and imply an understanding of society as a combination of mutually dependant groups, while at the same time legitimizing the harsh economic and political differences that separate them.

These functions remain valid in the cases where a combination of different binomials is used in order to emphasize certain aspects of catechetical advice. As shown above, these combinations are used as introductory addresses in secular urban legal texts, especially those with a strong oral tradition, such as *Burspraken*. Besides this textual tradition, learned discourse, especially regarding religious didactics, also has a tradition of using several binomials in order to emphasize the broad range of the advice to follow. This has been observed in regard to the *sermones ad status* of the mendicant orders, but the Pastoral Rule of Gregory had already used this rhetorical figure:

> Differently to be admonished are these that follow: men and women; the poor and the rich; the joyful and the sad; prelates and subordinates [etc.][223]

The presentation of social groups as an enumeration of dichotomous pairs is a recurrent rhetorical figure in Middle Low German didactical literature. *Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden seele* begins with the sorrow of

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221 Frenz, *Gleichheitsdenken*, 15–16.

222 Ibid., 24–27.

223 Gregorius. *The book of pastoral rule*. Ed. by George Demacopoulos. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007. Part III: How the ruler, while living well, ought to teach and admonish those that are put under him. Chapter I, 87ff.

beyde grot unde cleyne/arm ryke algemeyne/konninge vnde keysere komen dar/unde dat kynd dat syn moder ye gebar/cristen ioden vnde heyden [both large and small/poor and rich altogether/kings and emperors approach/ and each child ever born by a mother/Christians, Jews and pagans].[224] This enumeration begins with familiar oppositions, then moves to two binomials where the poles are situated on a similar hierarchical level (king and emperor, representing the top of the social ladder, and mother and child, its bottom) and finally encompasses not only Christian society but also the members of other religions. The hierarchical climax, the shift between high and low and the final verse where binomials are given up in favor of an all-embracing human triad have a dramatic effect that is only partly due to the context, the Last Judgment and the appearance of all humans before it. The rhetorical figure that combines binomials into extreme hierarchical poles also adds to the drama. The overall meaning of the list is that nobody is safe and, again, that all of humankind will ultimately be equal on Judgment Day.

While each of the dichotomous pairs is designed to embrace the entire society and hierarchical order, the combination of dichotomies instead fulfils functions similar to those of the *revues des états* by pointing to a moment of equality in a hierarchical system. The context of judgment, death and damnation seems to be particularly tied to the use of binomials in combination. The *Dodes Dantz* from Lübeck, for example, begins with the announcement that everybody must die:

> Den doet der natur můthe wy an gaen, alle gelike Junck, old, grot, kleyn, arm vnde ryke.[225]
>
> [All of us have to die the death of the body, all the same, young, old, large, small, poor and rich.]

In a more optimistic vein, the combination of binomials gives additional weight to a statement concerning all humans. A good example is the prayer book *Van der Bedroffenisse Marien*, which tries to reinforce the statement that everybody can become a servant of Christ with the dichotomies "man or woman, young or old, bride or groom." The paragraph addressing this also shows a distinct sensitivity regarding gender-specific forms of address: *dener edder denerinne cristi, lichte een knecht edder maghet*.[226]

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[224] Claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen, fol. 1v–2r.
[225] Dodes Dantz, Lübeck 1496, fol. 1v.
[226] Bedroffenisse Marien, fol. 159v.

The meaning of "everybody" is clarified in the translated bestseller *Hemmelsche funtgrove* as well, where a combination of oppositions is used to illustrate "all tribes of humankind," to wit, men and women, secular and spiritual people, Christians and Jews.[227] It is worth mentioning that the combination of dichotomous categories is not usually restricted to a single mechanism for category building. Equal use is made of biological differences, social status, wealth, and gender in individual listings. This creates the impression that all of these categories are natural, given distinctions and that everybody will belong to one of them sooner or later—again we see the notion of a potential for equality within fixed hierarchical frameworks.

The explicit combination of various binomials and their mutual support for each other's hierarchies point to an eternal and immutable structure—there will always be rich and poor, men and women, the first and the last. The individual may have no place in it, but while good luck and bad luck are part of God's plan, they also depend in part on one's own merit. These rudimentary schemes don't offer a consistent interpretation of the world or a response to the question of why there must be injustice and suffering, but they do provide a framework within which answers can be sought.

[227] "Tho dem ersten dar umme, dat he van allen geslechten der mynschen heft geleden, van mannen und frowen, van geistliken und wertliken, van heyden und van Ioden." De hemmelsche funtgrove, fol. 33r. Also: "Ok leeth dyn lichamme van allerleie minschen wegen. Van geistliken vnde werltlichen van joden vnde heiden, van vrowen vnde mannen, vnde leedest de aller gruwelikeste pinlicheit dat was de cruczynge dar dorch men sunderliken pyniget de leedematen dar de aderen to samende gan vnde leedest dat in der yogent dynes leuendes." Ibid., fol. 34r.

CHAPTER SIX

REVUES DES ÉTATS

Besides combinations of binomials, with their pronounced conception of the interconnection and relationship between the different poles, a looser form of listing social groups is also said to dominate late medieval texts: the *revue des états*,[1] a list of representatives of orders where the factors relevant for the distinction of one group from another are often intermingled, potentially making the lists effectively open-ended. The most prominent examples of the *revues des états* are the dances of death, which are structured around a descending hierarchy with the Pope on top and often a woman with a child at the bottom, as is the case in the Lübeck variant of the text. Their didactical and parenetical character and their connection to the various other lay didactical texts have been abundantly proven, particularly in the case of the Lübeck version.[2]

The structure of a *revue des états* is generally a popular means of structuring more entertaining texts—such as the play *Henselyns bok*—and as part of the confessional interrogations designed for specific social groups, but the genre is far from prominent in didactical literature. In contrast to the Latin guidebooks for priests, lay didactical books only occasionally include conclusive lists of representatives meant to present a specific set of required virtues (*Ständedidaxe*). Furthermore, even if entertaining texts, Latin guidebooks and lay catechisms appear to have a similar structure, yet they have different functions and encompass different concepts.

The *revue des états* as a structuring element is very rare in thirteenth-century German literature, but became increasingly popular in the fourteenth century, and not only in the German lands, due in large part to

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[1] The term was used in an attempt to systematize research into social groups by Batany et al., "Plan pour l'étude historique," 87–92. Due to the lack of an established terminology in English, I will use the French *revue des états* in this study. Another possibility would be the German *Ständereihe*, which is equally established in scholarly research and seems to be entirely synonymous with the French expression.

[2] Claussnitzer, Maike, et al. "Das Redentiner—ein Lübecker Osterspiel: Über das Redentiner Osterspiel von 1464 und den Totentanz der Marienkirche in Lübeck von 1463." *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 132, no. 2 (2003).

the influence of the mendicant orders and their pastoral theology.[3] Yet again, there are no comparative studies for the fifteenth century, but literary scholars suggest that by the fifteenth century the *revue des états* had already declined in popularity.[4] The representation of society by several distinct figures is in some cases difficult to distinguish from other tropes for society—functional tripartitions also contain representatives, as do the mill and chessboard allegories and the clergy-laity dichotomy. The main difference is not that in some cases several persons represent a group, while the *revue des états* have only a single representative, but the fact that the *revue* is potentially open-ended. This determines the importance of the way the representatives are sorted and sequenced, as well as of the gaps in the series: even though the chosen sequence most often has a clear hierarchy and vertical order, the *revue des états* also encompasses a distinct notion of equality—whatever happens in the text happens to all of the representatives. This potential limitlessness also determines the function of the *revues* as tropes for society: they are metonymies, with a subtotal of the representatives symbolizing the entity. As a result, the question of which part should be taken as representing the entity is the most difficult one. The choice of the representatives that a given *revue* presents as "society" probably follows certain rules: certain lists of representatives are presumably more likely than others. The common factor among all metonymies is that they propose themselves to *be* the entity, as was already apparent in the case of functional tripartition.

The unsystematic and necessarily incomplete presentation of the orders of society as a *revue des états* has roots both in the pastoral care of the mendicant orders and in political theory. In the latter case, prominently in the *Defensor pacis* by Marsilius of Padua, he foregoes the popular tripartite divisions and instead lists several professional areas: agriculture, handicrafts, the military, money transfer, the priesthood jurisdiction and administration. A hierarchical distinction is made between the *honoratiores* and the common people, but the distinction between clergy and laypeople is not as pronounced as it formerly was in both canon law and theological philosophy.[5] Instead, "those who belong to the state in a more

[3] Haren, Michael. "Social Ideas in the Pastoral Literature of Fourteenth-Century England." In *Religious belief and ecclesiastical careers in late medieval England*. Ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill, 43–57. Woodbridge: Boydell Pr., 1991.

[4] Boor, Helmut de, and Ingeborg Glier. *Die deutsche Literatur im späten Mittelalter: Zerfall und Neubeginn* 2. München: C.H. Beck, 1987, 96.

[5] Maurer, *Luthers Lehre*, 95.

narrow sense, clergy, military and judges"[6] are separated from the others, thereby establishing a distinction based on authority.

The textual tradition of penitential literature for priests, which draws heavily on *revues des états*, is more relevant for the lay didactical literature. The mendicant orders had developed differentiated ordering schemes, not as an eschatological description of society but based on the need for different spiritual guidelines for different social groups.[7] The classification of people based on their occupation was used in the *sermones ad status* and the penitential handbooks for priests, most comprehensively in the *Summa angelica*, which included separate forms of confessional interrogation, both those appropriate for all Christians and others differentiated by profession, family status and ecclesiastical office. Different forms of reasoning were employed in this case as well: since missionary preaching and conversion were distinct goals, it was not only Christian society that was included in lists of potential listeners, but also non-repentant sinners, Jews, heretics and pagans. The oral confession became the key setting and institution for the transfer of social ideals, morals and penance—although a rare occurrence in real life, given that the layperson only had the obligation to confess once a year, confession nonetheless gained importance as a central tool for establishing clerical power over daily life.[8] The *Summa angelica* and similar guidebooks used comprehensive differentiation in an overall strategy of "sacramental superimposition of the sinner's imperfect remorse,"[9] i.e. in order to increase the sacramental power of priests over all imaginable social groups. If all kinds of Christians and non-Christians were potential targets for the Good News, they were also potential subordinates to the Christian clergy. From the point of view of clerical writers, the *revue des états* was a suitable form for expressing the omnipresence of their claim to obedience.

However, when the public shifted, the same form came to represent something else entirely, as we will see. In lay didactical literature, the goal

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[6] Marsilius de Padua. *Defensor pacis*. Ed. by Richard Scholz. Hannover: Hahn, 1933, Book I, chapter V, § 3.

[7] Schmidt, Hans Joachim. "Allegorie und Empirie: Interpretation und Normung sozialer Realität in Predigten des 13. Jahrhunderts." In Schiewer/Mertens, eds., *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter*, 301–332, ibid., 305–310.

[8] Haren, Michael. "Confession, Social Ethics and Social Discipline in the 'Memoriale presbiterorum'." In *Handling sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*. Ed. by Peter Biller, 109–123. Woodbridge, Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 1998; Tentler, Thomas N. *Sin and confession on the eve of the Reformation*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977, 16.

[9] Ohst, Martin. *Pflichtbeichte: Untersuchungen zum Bußwesen im hohen und späten Mittelalter*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1995, 264.

of claiming universal obedience was transformed into something completely different: the diversity of social groups no longer served to increase the clergy's sacramental control, but rather had the exact opposite effect. It served to express the fragility of all social ordering and the potential of equality among the unequal.

Alfred Hubler, who has analyzed different high medieval literary genres in which a social ordering is discussed, refers to the *revues des états* as *Ständetext-Schema*, which he defines as a superstructure that formally (as a hierarchically descending list) and thematically (with representatives of orders serving as participants) configures the texts. But the *revue des états* does not configure the communicative and functional aspects of the text: this allows *revues des états* to appear in different genres and for different reading audiences. Within this superstructure, another scheme configures the text on the immediately underlying level, the descriptive level (*Ständebeschreibungs-Schema*), a scheme in which each group represented is first described and then ascribed certain privileges or virtues or specific spiritual challenges.[10] Hubler's comparative analysis shows that the superstructure of a *revue des états* is not connected to a specific ideological model—clerical, noble or otherwise—and thus different structures allow for different ideological positions to be advanced in different *revue des états* texts. It is questionable whether the same statement also holds true for lay didactical literature. Since there are so few examples of the *revue des états* as a structuring element for an entire text, and since, with a few exceptions, they occur in epic and entertaining texts with didactical aims, rather than in catechetical texts, it is quite likely that they do, in fact, arise from a specific ideology that they are meant to express. This can be discerned on several levels: first, the evidence of a specific rhetorical form; second, the specific choices and omissions of representatives and their positions; and third, textual context.

Two texts in the Middle Low German sample use the *revues des états* throughout the text. *Dodes Dantz* adds short introductory and concluding chapters surrounding the *revue*, where Death speaks as the figure that guides the reader through the text and presents the list of representatives.[11]

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[10] Hubler, *Ständetexte*, 33–34.

[11] A description of the incunabulum from 1489 can be found in Schulte, Brigitte. "Ausgewählte Zeugnisse der Rezeption des Lübecker Totentanzes. Des Dodes Dantz, 1489." In *Der Totentanz der Marienkirche in Lübeck und der Nikolaikirche in Reval (Tallinn)*. Ed. by Hartmut Freytag and Stefan Blessin, 345–348. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 1993.

Henselyns bok, a small anonymous Lübeck incunabulum,[12] consists of an introduction and an epilogue framing rhymed dialogues between a father, his three sons, the fool Henselyn and the list of representatives. The dialogues between the sons and Henselyn, on the one hand, and the representatives, on the other hand, comprise approximately half of the text. Despite the differences in form, these two books have a communicative function similar to catechetical books.

Among the catechetical books, only *Licht der Seelen*, clearly inspired by mendicant guidebooks and their specific formulations of the *cura animarum* of different groups, explicitly uses a *revue des états* as the structuring element of an entire lengthy chapter—in this case, the list is comprised entirely of laypeople. Two additional catechetical books include *revues des états*, not as structuring elements of entire texts or even chapters, but as small rhetorical forms that present a potential metonymy representing society en passant. *Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde* from Magdeburg is a printed version of the Middle Low German translation of Gerardus de Vliederhoven's *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum*, and thereby belongs to the translated bestsellers. Both *Licht der Seelen* and *Speygel der dogede* are examples of anonymous Middle Low German compilations of unknown origin. It is possible that *Henselyns bok* is the work of a lay author. As such, all factors used to distinguish a certain ideological basis for a text—genre, structure, famous or anonymous author, clerical or lay author, a purely religious audience or an audience with general moral and religious interests—are represented in the sample. However, the fact that the two texts using the *revue des états* as their basic structuring element are not catechetical but generally didactical books and belong to textual traditions deeply grounded in the burgher's social life remains significant.

The introductory chapters of *Dodes Dantz* and *Henselyns bok* make their didactical goals clear and firmly place them within the tradition of parenetical *Erbauungsliteratur*, but with a distinct urban and burgher-related flavor.[13] This means that even though the *revue* is generally known and used in texts transmitting a traditional clerical ideology, in

[12] Presentation of research connected to *Henselyns bok* can be found in Heß, ed. *Gerechtigkeit*, 41–45.

[13] The characterization of *Dodes Danz* and *Henselyns bok* as *Erbauungsbücher* can be found in Schulte, Brigitte. *Die deutschsprachigen spätmittelalterlichen Totentänze: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Inkunabel "Des Dodes Dantz" Lübeck 1489*. Köln: Böhlau, 1990, 66–68.

the fifteenth-century Middle Low German sample it is a rhetorical form more closely connected to urban lay ideology than to clerical ideology. The form has remained stable, but using the potential of equality found in the *revues*, the interests of a different constituency are sustained. This leads to the second level of investigation, the choice of the representatives for the metonymy, which can vary widely, as comparison shows.

Social groups mentioned in Middle Low German *revue des états* texts

Dodes Dantz, Lübeck 1496	Henselyns bok	Licht der Seelen, fol. 43r–50v	Speygel der dogede, fol. 229v–230v	Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde, fol. 4v
pope	pope	kings, knights and rulers	prelates, judges, bailiffs, princes	clergy and highest prelates
emperor	emperor	mayors, members of the city council	civil servants	princes and lords
empress	Prince-electors	judges	spiritual people in monasteries	elders and rulers
cardinal	soldiers	rich people	usurers	priests
king	clergy	poor people		elders
bishop	drunkards	peasants		the people
duke	women	young and foolish people		subordinates
abbot	monks	old and sick people		virgins
Knight Templar		widows		
monk		virgins or young women		
knight		servants and maids		
canon		craftsmen and workers		
mayor		physicians		
physician		merchants		
nobleman		usurers and gamblers		
hermit				
citizen				
student				
merchant				
nun				
craftsman				
church warden				
peasant				
Beguine				
rider				
maiden				
journeyman				
nurse with child				

It is necessary to first decide if the list of representatives adheres to a descending hierarchical order. Birgit Schulte has assumed this to be the common formulation:[14] the pope and the emperor, then both leading secular and clerical groups, followed in descending order by the town's leading groups, merchants and craftsmen, young people and children. But as the many variations of the representatives in the different versions of the texts and picture cycles indicate, none of the decisions made in the Lübeck *Dodes Dantz* to establish a hierarchical order seem to be fixed; in fact, by the time of the Lübeck 1520 edition, many representatives were sorted differently—for example, here the emperor and empress follow the highest clerical ranks of pope, cardinal and bishop.[15] The only given in the *Dodes Dantz* hierarchy is its flexibility; everyone will fall sooner or later, drawing attention to the instability of the social order and the superiority of the order of virtues.[16] Accordingly, the exact order of the representatives in the *revue* is neither absolute nor unalterable.[17]

However, the Lübeck version has pope and emperor on the top and the empress in third position, followed by an alternating list of ecclesiastical and secular rulers—cardinal, king, bishop, duke and so on. In this way, the same degree of differentiation is applied to both clerical and noble groups. These alternating pairs of rulers are followed by urban representatives—mayor and physician. As to the remainder of the list, three or four lay representatives are followed by one clerical representative, and then by those who live a spiritual life without having taken formal vows or belonging to a clerical order—a hermit and a Beguine, followed by a nun, whose position openly excludes women from the clerical order. There is no rigid descending hierarchy of laypeople implied, since the student—who is classed among the unstable groups and is often suspected of begging and fraud—is followed by the merchant. Given the somewhat random assortment of lay groups and religious people gathered in the final third of the list, the primary ordering principle in the Lübeck *Dodes*

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[14] Schulte, *Die deutschsprachigenTotentänze*, 101; 73.

[15] Sodmann, Timothy, ed. *Dodendantz: Lübeck 1520; Faksimileausgabe mit Textabdruck, Glossar und einem Nachwort*. Vreden: Achterland, 2001.

[16] "Ordo-Programm nach franziskanischer Werkgerechtigkeit," Hartmut Freytag calls the didactical program of the Lübeck *Dodes Dantz*. Freytag, "Zum Beispiel Lübeck," 129.

[17] Mackenbach, Johan P. "Social Inequality and Death as Illustrated in Late-Medieval Death Dances." *American Journal of Public Health* 85, no. 9 (1995), presents a comparison between the lists of representatives for all social groups in French and German Dance of Death versions and identifies the order suggested by the French printer Guyot Marchant as "classical", but by no means compulsory. Ibid., 1289.

Dantz does not seem to be a strict descending hierarchy, but instead a differentiation into two groups that have an approximately equal number of distinctions rather than an explicit boundary between them. The arithmetical middle or boundary is between the physician and the nobleman, while the logical boundary may fall after the nobleman, and before the hermit or, if a moral order is followed, after the hermit (whose morally superior status is suggested by Death's speech to him, as has been noted in previous research).[18]

The indifference concerning a strict hierarchy in a *revue des états* also derives from the coexistence of clerical, noble and urban strata, with each organized vertically on the basis of their own hierarchies. The dance of death and other *revues des états* attempt to transform three parallel vertical orders into a single one, or, more likely, four vertical orders, since female representatives of some strata are also included and are sorted based on a certain idea of where the "female order" might stand in the overall hierarchy. However, the assignment of female representatives to specific positions in the hierarchy is not consistent: the empress represents the only higher rank held by a woman, while the nun, for example, does not come directly after the monk, but follows the upper echelons of urban society—again, this differs from the 1520 Lübeck version, where the nun comes after the mayor and before the merchant. Consequently, the concrete position held in the hierarchy of a *revue des états* cannot be assumed to be a particularly important indication of the social status of the group represented, since most of the positions are unstable constructs.

For dances of death, it is not only their textual tradition that is relevant, but in most cases their tradition as picture cycles as well. The Lübeck incunabulum was one printed text in a long European tradition of images with vernacular subscriptions closely connected to the picture cycle in the Marienkirche in Lübeck constituting a genre consisting primarily of images, not of linguistic forms. The hierarchical aspect might well be more forcefully developed in the print treatment than is the case in the images themselves—in the latter, the notion of equality is much stronger, since the representatives are lined up beside each other on the church walls, they are all the same size and are only distinguished by the

[18] "Ja broder Konrât, efte wo dîn name is geheten / Diner guden werke werstu altohant geneten. / Got wert di lonen dorch siner groten barmherticheit," Death says to the monk. Dodes Dantz, Lübeck 1496, fol. 36r.

recurring figure of Death.[19] Political expression and order-specific criticism was given form in the dances of many of the pairs, with Death as the primary element in all of them.[20] The dance motif is less prominent in the book form, as is the connection between the different representatives—in the picture cycle, they all seem to be connected to each other by Death, while the book presents them more as separate chapters. This diminishes the notion of equality and increases the importance of the individual figure and his or her dialogue with Death.

In spite of these largely speculative considerations—due to the lack of insight into medieval reading and viewing habits—one thing remains clear: there are rulers, who appear in the first half of the list, and there are subordinates, who appear in the second section. The precise internal ordering of these groups is of less relevance than is the number of subgroups. Whether or not the knight is above the canon in the hierarchy might be of less importance than the general position of both of them in the upper half of the list. In the same sense, the positioning of the mother with the child or the Jew in the upper half is unthinkable, while it is of less importance which of the two is located at the very end of the list. Since the lists as entities are potentially open-ended, an approximate ordering within the well-established opposition between superior and inferior seems the most likely explanation of the differing choices of representatives and their placement in the list.

But the *revue des états*, paradigmatically expressed in the *Dodes Dantz*, still differs from the basic bipartite oppositions. The partition of society into two sections is stable, but the gaps in the list are still significant. Potentially open-ended does not mean inclusive, and the limitation of the Lübeck version of *Dodes Dantz* to Christian society is striking. Danse macabre texts make clear that the use of order-ranking motifs facilitate deviant representations of the social order. Who represents the "entire society," which powers and which orders rule and who is excluded—all of this is unstable. However, using a stable representation motif serves to expose inherent contradictions, the most prominent one being the general contradiction between the two concurrent ordering systems available

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[19] On the relationship between images and the text in the German dances of death see Warda, Susanne. *Memento mori. Bild und Text in Totentänzen des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*. Köln: Böhlau, 2009, 84–98, on the Lübeck incunabulum from 1496. More generally, on the performative differences and the text-image interaction see Gertsman, Elina. *The dance of death in the Middle Ages: Image, text, performance*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

[20] Dreier, *Totentanz*, 130–131.

during the Late Middle Ages—the order of estates and the order of virtues. The Lübeck *Dodes Dantz* chooses to distinguish people entirely on the basis of functional factors, and a basic binary opposition that relativizes the importance of the position of individual representatives can be detected in this distinction.

The *Henselyns bok* is based on a concept and a structure that is similar to that of the *Dodes Dantz*, but with a different outcome.[21] The *revue des états* is formed based on a strict idea of the social order and the attempt to reproduce it in the text, which was characterized as a carnival play in older research, but has been treated as an edifying book[22] or a *Ständetext*[23] in more recent research. Accompanied by comments outlining the pedagogical purpose of the text, the core part is structured as a *revue des états*: the fool Henselyn and three brothers, a burgher's sons, travel the world in order to find their father's will, *rechtferdicheyt* (a term in Middle Low German that can mean justice, justification or righteousness). They do not visit individual representatives, but groups of people, and their collocation calls to mind the descending hierarchies of the *Dodes Dantz* with the inclusion of some striking differences, most particularly the combination of functional and moral reasoning for the distinction of the groups. The sorting of secular and clerical rulers into pairs is also replaced by a strictly descending hierarchy with only secular orders following the pope—emperor, electoral princes, soldiers, clerics, drunkards, women, and monks.

This suggests that the clergy is ranked below secular rulers, with an additional statement being made about the social position of the clergy by the fact that the monks appear at the very bottom of the list after women and sinners. Merchants or burghers are entirely missing in this specific *revue des états*, but these urban groups are represented by the traveling brothers themselves, which is clarified by their self-conscious behavior, their wealth and the order-specific guidelines for a Christian life that are presented at the end of the text after the brothers have returned home. Additionally, merchants are spared the criticism received by the other orders and professions addressed in the text—the lack of *rechtfertigkeyt*—since they are represented by the stable group of people who are

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[21] Henselyn [Low German verse]. [Lübeck: The Poppy Printer (Hans van Ghetelen), about 1498].

[22] Schulte, Birgit. "Das Henselynsboek als Erbauungsschrift: Versuch einer Interpretation." In Damme, ed. *Franco-Saxonica*, 319–342.

[23] Heß, *Gerechtigkeit*, 16.

investigating the others. The superiority of the merchant class is reflected by their position in the dialogues where they always represent the active, leading part, and they are spared direct criticism. This calls to mind the omission of the clergy from social imagery in other texts with a morally didactical purpose: when written by a cleric and read by laypeople, criticism of the clergy is deemed unsuitable. In the *Henselyns bok*, the equivalent is that criticism of merchants is unsuitable in a text written by a layperson to be read by laypeople.

The overall arrangement of the orders in the *Henselyns bok* points to an anticlerical, anti-feminist, potentially anti-noble ideology, where the pope alone is accepted as the spiritual head of Christianity followed by secular rulers of various rank. Women and sinners mark the boundaries of Christian society, and the clergy no longer plays a significant role. The *revues des états* address both aspects of equality and aspects of hierarchy: the first hierarchical relationship in the text is the one between the static part of the dialogue—Death or the group of brothers and the fool—and it is this static part that decides who to visit next, that initiates the dialogue and that structures the entire plot, thereby determining the superior component of each hierarchical pair in each dialogue.

The second hierarchical relationship is the aforementioned descending hierarchy among the representatives of the orders, which is stricter in the *Henselyns bok* and more oriented to a general boundary between rulers and subordinates in the *Dodes Dantz*. But there is also a strong sense of equality, which is most concretely expressed in the dance of death texts: all the representatives are equal in the face of death, God and judgment. Their collocation into a secular hierarchy is undermined by the encounter with a higher power that manifests itself as the superior part of the dialogue. To apply this interpretation to the *Henselyns bok*, thereby defining the brothers as a power superior to all the represented groups, would certainly be going too far, but there is a concept of the superiority of the burgher's class in the staging, which derives from the strong model of the *revue des états*.[24]

Danse macabre texts combine two different social ordering schemes: the structure of the text as a hierarchical ranking of orders and groups, representing the scholastic model of harmony in inequality, is contradicted by the motif of *Memento mori*, which implies a biblical idea of

[24] An interpretation of the social ordering in *Henselyns bok* compared to two other lay didactical texts in Heß, *Gerechtigkeit*, 13–24.

equality before God. In the danse macabre texts and picture cycles from the German-speaking countries, the genre's utility for didactical purposes, the presentation of the central assertions of the observance movements and criticism of rulers and functional elites were fully developed and exploited.[25] Even criticism against the clergy was expressed in this framework, distinguishing between the secular activities of the prelates and bishops and the lack of monastic virtue on the part of monks; for example, unchaste conduct and gluttony. This is a bit different in the *Henselyns bok*, where the criticism against the clergy's privileges is reinforced by placing both clerics and monks on the edges of the social order, thereby representing the clerical order as something entirely different and outside of the beneficial secular order, which is defined by either authority or economic power. The concrete accusations against them do not differ from those expressed in the *Dodes Dantz* or other late medieval texts: they are not sufficiently educated and cannot even speak proper Latin, they do not practice what they preach, and they are entirely caught up in their own sense of importance.[26] Many other factors common to anticlerical criticism in the Late Middle Ages are lacking here, however, such as sexual deviance and simony.[27] Furthermore, the criticism of the clergy in this context is always connected to a general criticism that is also directed at all other groups, and is, as such, not particularly radical or even all that surprising: if everyone is subjected to criticism, this relativizes the importance of the criticism of a particular group.

The representation of clerical groups in the *revues des états* is strikingly different in the more entertaining texts available—such as the *Dodes Dantz* and the *Henselyns bok*—than in the more catechetical texts. This is easily explained by the traditions underlying the catechetical texts, which were originally written by priests for priests, or rather by mendicants for parish priests. The different social groups selected as potential targets for sermons of different qualities derived from the need for specific pastoral care, which led to the further development of the penitential literature of the mendicant orders and their all-encompassing approach

[25] Dreier, *Totentanz*, 73; 130–131.

[26] "De klosterlůde: […] uns horet den Leyen rechtferdicheyt vortogeven / se straffen in ören bőzen seden un nuen sunden / dar ysaias in synen drydden van heft geschreven / placebo dorch Gunst heft nicht rechtferdicheyt, men part in den sunden. De erste broder: Unse sőkent is doch nicht vele bewant / nu wy se hir nicht hebben gefunden / de meysten holden Rechtferdicheyt fur eyn tantt / sy hebbent gehort, se is vyl na der werlt verswunden." Henselyn, p. 15.

[27] Sánchez, *Anticlericalism*, 36.

to "all Christians."[28] For example, the *Summa Angelica* (first printed in 1476) includes interrogations of the different orders stretching over twelve printed pages, comprising more than fifty different categories, including both clerical orders and laypeople.[29] There is no comprehensive overview of the lists of professions used in penitential literature, which makes a comparison with the instructive literature in the vernacular difficult. Generally speaking, each individual list represents what could be understood as a complete description of society within the text's functional framework. Since the most distinct feature of these lists is different professions, the importance of employment or social function as a factor used to divide people must be investigated here.

In *Licht der Seelen*, the list of groups requiring special consideration during confession includes kings, knights and rulers; mayors, members of the city council, judges; rich people; poor people; peasants; young and foolish people; old and sick people; widows; virgins or young women; servants and maids; craftsmen, workers and physicians.[30] Interestingly enough, no members of the clerical order are mentioned. The willingness to expose the secrets of the clerical profession to a non-clerical—and possibly hostile—public reaches its limit here. The exclusion of the clerical order from any kind of confessional inquiry leaves out even the prelates and archbishops, who, along with kings and lords, serve as secular rulers, and who are often included in the lists of ruling groups in other contexts. It is striking that in a text that was supposed to provide knowledge about religious matters, the clerical order was segregated from the other orders and spared criticism—at the same time, this served to diminish the importance of clerics in the overall concept of society.

The list is an example of the eclecticism applied to social categories in texts of this kind. Many professions are missing; functional, moral and biological categories are intermingled; biological categories are combined with either a moral or a social quality; young people are considered foolish or precocious and in need of the humility that comes with experience. Likewise, gender is only an issue if combined with civil or social status: widows are mentioned, as are young, unmarried women and maidens. Beyond that, no female representatives of professions are mentioned, and "women" as a category seems inconceivable. This provides a certain sense

[28] Tentler, *Sin and confession*, 165.
[29] Ohst, *Pflichtbeichte*, 248–251.
[30] Licht der Seelen, fol. 43r–50v.

of the formative role of gender in relation to status and other factors in the overall social position of women.[31] Based on an analysis of the social groups in late medieval towns, administrative staff, along with mayors and judges, constitute their own category as a functional stratum—an upper class of non-noble functionaries that ruled the city. Even in a time of increasing professionalization of secular judges, they continued to be perceived as part of the same group as council members, and not as a group of their own. In *Licht der Seelen*, the *revue* only vaguely reflects the comprehensive lists in manuals for confession written for priests. Only the combination of professional, moral and social aspects for choosing the representatives is evoked.

Given the superior social groups in this list from *Licht der Seelen*—indicated by their appearance on the top of the list and the number of confessional interrogations prepared for them—society is structured based on an unconventional concept of rule that recognizes two ruling groups: kings, knights and rulers in general who represent the nobility, and mayors, judges, the city council and the rich, who represent ruling groups in late medieval towns where the nobility played a limited role and the upper classes imitated the lifestyle of the nobility in order to pronounce their claim to a similar power. A further differentiation of the many groups of craftsmen is obviously of less interest in this list. This is in sharp contrast to the sophisticated distinctions among different crafts that we know from normative sources and taxation lists: every aspect of a craft played a role in determining the craftsman's prestige, from the smell of the goods to their role in long- or short-distance trade. This prestige was in turn connected to political influence, especially eligibility for the city councils. Most of the social uprisings that occurred in the cities of the Hanseatic League during the fifteenth century centered precisely on the distribution of political influence among different craftsmen, something that merchants tried to combat and restrict.[32] The lack of differentiation among the various crafts in didactical literature makes credible the idea that the texts supported both the merchants as the ruling elite in the urban spheres and their claim to power against groups that they traditionally saw as socially inferior.

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[31] On this interdependence between gender and status, see for example McNamara, Jo A., and Suzanne Wemple. "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500–1100." *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1973).

[32] Wensky, "Städtische Führungsschichten"; Brady, "Patricians," 45; Graßmann, "Sozialer Aufstieg."

Even though largely a catechetical text, the *Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde* makes a different use of the *revue des états* as an image for society. The text, a translation of Gerardus de Vliederhoven's *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum*, belongs to the category of translated bestsellers. The context is a contemplation of the final things, in this case doomsday and the overall lack of virtue on the part of the various social groups, all of whom will be punished in the end.

> Wente van den geystliken vnde ouersten prelaten is vorswunden de doget vnde dat gesette der geystliken vnde godliken ee. Van den forsten vnde heren de rechtuerdicheyt. Van den olden vnde regerers de wyse rath vnde de leue der vorsichticheyt ouer vndersaten. Van den papen de geystlicheyt. Van den olderen de leue. Van deme volke de cristlike geloue. Van den vndersaten vnde neddersten de werdicheyt vnde alle gehorsam der vnderdanicheyt. Van den iunckfrouwen, de leue der kusscheyt vnde iunckfrowelike seedicheyt. Vnde dat is dat de Anticristus noch nich gekomen is.[33]
>
> [Since virtue and the order of the spiritual and godly law has disappeared among the clergy and the highest prelates. Righteousness among the lords and princes. Wise counsel and love of mindfulness among the elders and rulers. Spirituality among the priests. Love among the elders. Christian belief among the people. Dignity and obedience to subordination among the subordinates and lowest. Love of chastity and virgin virtuousness among the virgins. And this is even before the Antichrist has arrived.]

The *revue des états* starts with prelates, moves on to lords and princes, elders and rulers (counselors), priests, old people, the people in general, subordinates and virgins. A descending hierarchy is implied but not strictly pursued. In this case, the *revue des états* is clearly not an important element throughout the text, but structures only a short section. The sample of social groups seems to be assembled not so much on the basis of the groups themselves, but with regard to the order-specific virtues they are said to lack: prelates—(canon) law; lords—justice/righteousness; priests—spirituality; elders—love; the people—Christian belief; subordinates—dignity and humble obedience; and virgins—chastity and virgin virtue.

While the sorting of social groups may seem a bit random, the list of virtues assigned to them is not: the law is the origin and basis and the virtues that follow are a sample of those usually assigned as cures for the seven mortal sins: altogether there are seven virtues presented here. All of this points to a functional shift of the *revue des états* in this context, one

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[33] Spegel aller lefhebberen, fol. 4r–4v.

that is already well-known from the other tropes for society: it is not the social order that is addressed, but an order of virtues. At the same time, the concept of equality is removed from the sphere of social equality and transposed into a concept of an equal need to behave more virtuously, regardless of one's social position. The point of reference is the Antichrist, and thereby an eschatological dimension in which contemporary orders are only relevant with regard to their assigned virtues. Accordingly, the factors dividing the groups are simultaneously authority, clerical status, age and sexual activity. For the society addressed by the metonymy, this means that all humankind is actually encompassed, since "subordinates" moves the concept of society from one of a purely Christian community in the direction of a political instance that can also include non-Christians. This corresponds with other images and descriptions of doomsday, all of which include *cristen ioden vnde heyden* in the list[34] and generally combine different rhetorical forms in order to describe the omnipresence of the judgment and the fact that literally all humans will have to face it. This also means that the existing social order gains a sense of finiteness and will be replaced by a coming order that will be solely sorted based on virtue.

One way of dividing people into groups is never enough, it seems. Sorting a *revue des états* entirely based on profession or functionality leaves women out. Sorting it based on age alone leaves authority figures out. When authority is the only principle permitted for dividing people, women are once again left out, and the problem regarding the superiority of secular or ecclesiastical power arises, as does the problem of the position of merchants. Nonetheless, *revues des états* claim to be shaped entirely on the basis of functionality (if they address the issue at all). A clear statement of this kind is found in *Speygel der dogede*, which includes a short enumeration of social groups in the chapter entitled *an allerleye mynschen arbeyde*, addressing several kinds of work done by people. The list—very closely resembling the short section that includes a *revue des états* in the aforementioned *Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde* and combining professions and assigned virtues in a similar way—includes prelates, lords, judges and reeves, all of whom are supposed to strive for wisdom in order to justly rule and protect their subordinates. Bailiffs are supposed to do their work without disturbing the people. Spiritual people in religious

[34] See above chapter V on oppositions, for example in *Claghe unde droffenisse der vordomeden sele*.

orders are supposed to pray for themselves and others, especially those on whose work they live and to whom they are therefore indebted. The acts of ascetism and virtue required of them are a way to pay their debt to society, for whom they serve as an example. Finally, usurers, who do not work at all, are said to be doomed.[35]

This chapter relies upon the traditional functional tripartition, but manages to turn it into an anticlerical statement. The basis of the functional tripartition, mutual rights and duties, is extensively described, focusing on each group's duties, its *arbeyde*. The work described constitutes order-specific tasks and virtues, including the duty to develop and expand these virtues. The basic assignments are based on functional tripartition: the rulers are supposed to protect and rule with wisdom, the clergy are supposed to pray. And the workers? They are missing. It seems that all those who live by their own labor are saved and are excluded from the criticism. Instead, the explicit non-workers, the usurers, are described in all their sinfulness and vice. Three aspects of this update of functional tripartition are interesting: first, its definition of authority, which includes nobles, the nobility's counselors and governors and urban administrative staff; second, its lack of order-specific advice and duties for the workers; third, the explicit mention of the clergy as living off other people's work and their debt to those *denne gude unde arbeyt se vorteren* [whose goods and work they consume]. While order-specific criticism, such as a lack of chastity or an engagement in secular matters, is very common in monastic literature as well, the explicit mention of the clergy living off other people's work is quite unique. In terms of a metaphor for society, what looked like a *revue des états* at first glance ended up being the development of a critique of the clergy in the context of functional tripartition, only vaguely reminiscent of the traditional form used to describe a harmonious feudal society.

As a final example, a certain type of *revues des états* is used in texts coming from a discourse that is only occasionally represented in the purely parenetical literature, one that deals with astrology in a vernacular context. In both *Lucidarius* and Johannes Virdung's *Prognosticon*, people, or rather groups of people, are differentiated based on their relationship to the planets. This differentiation is not new: it is an adaptation of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, where he develops a system of character inquiry based on the connection of people to the planets, and the resultant positive or negative

[35] Speygel der dogede, fol. 229v–230r.

qualities.[36] The astrological works in the vernacular go a little further and present entire lists of social groups, which are connected to the planets and assigned qualities of character. *Lucidarius* states that people who have received a cold nature from a cold planet do not like to talk and are generally unfaithful, while those of a cold and humid nature like to talk, but give up easily. People of a warm and dry nature are serious, like to have many women and are unreliable in the way they conduct their lives, just like the planet Mars, which stirs unchastity in people. Finally, people of a warm and humid nature are simple, attractive and entirely unchaste.[37] Johannes Virdung's *Prognosticon* takes yet another step and assigns concrete groups of people specific planets and a horoscope for the year, but leaves out qualities of character. His *revue des états* includes:

> Saturn: Jews, monks, canons, old people, shoemakers, tanners and other people with dirty jobs
> Jupiter: the pope, cardinals, bishops, archbishops, priests and many other spiritual people
> The sun: kings, dukes, the mighty who have a noble and powerful origin
> Mars: Turks, knights, riders, those who bear arms, physicians, barbers
> Venus: virgins, women, those who play a stringed instrument, singers
> Mercury: masters of the seven free arts, students, mathematicians, astronomers, merchants, alchemists, black artists, masters of calculation, people with sharp senses
> The moon: common people and servants[38]

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[36] Ptolemy. *Tetrabiblos*. Ed. by Frank E. Robbins. Cambridge et al.: Harvard University Press, 1980, Book III, Chapter 13. I thank Dr. Kelly Smith for drawing my attention to this.

[37] "Etlike planeten effte sternen sint kolder nature, etlike van warmer nature, etlik vuchter nature, etlik drogher nature, de suluen naturen thud de minsche van deme ghesterne. Welk mynsche de kolder vnde drogher nature is de swiget gerne, vnde is untruwe […] men de dar heiter vnde vuchter nature, de is simpel, milde vnde kone, vnde is gantz vnkusch." Lucidarius, p. 29.

[38] "De vi underscheit van den stande der menschen na der natur der souen planeten. De menschen under geworpen saturn alse ioden monnike olde lude schomeker gerwer unde ander menschen de graue unde unreine hantwerke driuen unde swarte farue van natur leuen […] De menschen under geworpen dem jupiter, also ys de hillige vader de pawest it synen cardinalen bisschopen ertz bischopen presteren unde mit vele anderen geistliken personen […] de menschen under geworpen deme mars, also syn turcken tatern ridder rueter wepener arsten barberer dit iare se streuen werden mit den geistliken mit manigerleie anfachtynge se under to drucken […] de menschen undergeworpen der sonne also sin koninge forste unde grotmechtige de dar eyn ortsprunkt eines edelen stammes hebben werden hebben dit iar einen manichvoldigen stant itzunt krich itzunt wedderwerdicheit van krankheit unde vele ut en werden enttogen ore schette […] de menschen under geworpen deme venus also synt iunckfrouwen frowen senger seidenspeler in dem anbegynne dusses iars, se soken werden froude […] de menschen under geworpen marcurio, also synt mester der souen frien kunste studenten matematici astronomi rekenmeister koplude alchemisten swartkunstiger unde menschen eines scharpen syns,

It is noteworthy that this model combines anti-clerical and anti-Jewish resentments—Jews and monks are grouped together with the dirty professions—acknowledging ecclesiastical authorities, but removing monks from the clerical group. The traditional functional distinction is further differentiated by an additional division of the upper nobility and those who fight and bear arms into two groups, with a Muslim group among the fighters. Virdung's *revue des états* speaks of a kind of normalization of the relationship between Christians and non-Christians—the latter are assigned a place in the social order. They are not differentiated into professions, as are Christians, but on the basis of the main points of contact between them and the Christian population in Europe: the Turks represent the violent conflicts on the eastern borders of the empire in the course of the most recent Crusades, and the Jews are banished into the group made up of the dirty professions, representing their actual banishment from most German cities at the end of the fifteenth century.

Other functional differentiations bear a distinct anti-feminist resentment since women, both married and non-married, together with the "effeminate" professions of singers and musicians, are grouped together, with no further differentiation of the entire female gender deemed necessary. Any consideration of or knowledge about people's qualities of character based on the planets do not apply to women, since they all belong to Venus.

The unusual number of distinctions among the people belonging to Mercury is obviously the result of Virdung's own profession, as it does not arise in other *revues des états*. Similarly, the "common people" are simply sorted into a single group after those who do not belong to the traditional third estate have already been sorted in a way that excludes them from the mainstream of society—women, dirty professions, academics, and peasants.

Johannes Virdung's *revue des états* stands in the tradition of both the Ptolemean assignment of character qualities to people and of the ordering of people into functionally divided *revues des états*. It is striking how his division differs from those of clerical and of urban non-noble origin, especially regarding the emphasis on his own professional group and the lack of interest in religious and economic distinctions, thereby proving

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in dem anbegynne vele beswert unde bedrouet werden [. . .] de menschen under geworpen dem maen also is dat gemeine volk boden unde dener eyn gut iar erlangen werden so de dusternisse des mondes er gemote nicht beswerende were [. . .]" Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon, fol. 73v–75r.

the character of the *revues des états* as one option among many others for representing society in metonymic form. The author's—or compilator's, or translator's—personal position and interests do not usually govern the ideological connotations of the text or the principles used to choose metonymic representatives and group them together quite as obviously as is the case with Johannes Virdung's many black arts, but the potential is always there.

Revues des états are a form of representing society that was very common in both entertaining and catechetical texts until the Late Middle Ages. It was not, however, used to structure entire books very often—there are only two examples in the sample, and both of them of a more entertaining character. In the case of didactical books—both translated bestsellers and Middle Low German originals—*revues des états* are very rare and are only used to structure shorter chapters. This means that one of the major textual traditions, confessional guidebooks for priests, plays a minor role among catechetical books in the Middle Low German region, since most of these include sections with advice for different social groups which are effectively *revues des états*. Only the anonymous *Licht der Seelen* draws on this tradition by providing several chapters with order-specific catechetical advice, thereby making use of the *revue des états* as a relevant structuring element. In this case, the attempt to be comprehensive when choosing representatives is obvious: all possible bases of distinction are used and combined, without, however, being elaborated upon.

When used to structure an entire text, the *revue des états* works as a metonymy: a part of an entity that is considered significant represents the entity itself. The interesting aspect here is which elements are considered significant and how they are presented, ordered and distinguished. It is clear that authority, profession and gender are, unsurprisingly, the relevant factors for choosing representatives. Age can also play a significant role, with a clear assignment of wisdom and authority to those who are older and foolishness and insignificance to the young.

Catechetical books, where the *revues des états* neither structure the entire text nor quantitatively or thematically relevant parts of the books, but only short chapters, place a greater focus on authority and, as a result, the criticism of clergy and nobility increases relative to that directed towards other orders. The peak of this development can be found in the anonymous collection *Speygel der dogede*, which conceals quite radical anti-clerical statements in catechetical advice, but does not adopt a general stance claiming status inversion: all those who represent authority may be subjected to criticism, but none are neglected. This text element

actually moves from a *revue des états* towards an updated functional tripartition that makes radical use of functionality as a means for dividing people into groups, with the anti-clerical potential in what had originally been a clerical ideology being fully played out.

In a way that closely resembles the function of oppositions, the metonymic imagery of the *revues des états* serves to suggest an all-encompassing view of society, the illusion of speaking about "all humans" and to "all humans", but a closer look reveals the metonymy's gaps and presuppositions. Women are generally only mentioned as representatives of their gender and not on the basis of functional principles. The clergy is entirely overlooked—as is the case in *Licht der Seelen*—or treated as part of authority in general. The problem posed by the merchant's ambiguous and unclear position in the social hierarchy is not resolved by a more comprehensive enumeration of the social groups around him. Furthermore, when an order based on social groups is replaced by or at least overlaps with an order based on virtue—as in *Spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen werlde*—the merchant's position is not apparent at all.

When it comes to the *revues des états*, the translated bestsellers and anonymous Middle Low German originals are not where differences of discourse play out: it is between more entertaining and more catechetical texts that that occurs. Functionality, authority and order are important, but they are represented differently in different texts. Only one thing is certain for all of them: the *revue des états* is not a master narrative used to represent social hierarchies or social equality in the Late Middle Ages.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

Besides functional and moral tripartitions and *revues des états*, there is yet another metaphor for society that is often portrayed as a master narrative—the body metaphor, also called the organological model. This metaphor is firmly rooted in the political theory of the High Middle Ages and was still common in early modern texts and images. In this case as well, continuity from the Late Middle Ages onward can be and has been assumed.[1] But just as is the case with the other candidates for master narratives, the body metaphor is also conspicuous by its absence in the late medieval lay didactical literature, at least as a metaphor for society,[2] with one exception: *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, the one text that adopts, combines and employs all of the traditional ordering images, also provides a single example of the body metaphor in a late medieval lay didactical form.

The political implications of the chosen personifications for a certain understanding of society are exemplified in the German ideology of the *Volkskörper*, which defined some humans as functioning and desirable body parts and others as inflamed appendices, tumors, etc. The propaganda value of the rhetorical figure of the body metaphor is a reification of people into limbs, and thereby their loss of personal value.[3] Kenneth Stow sees the concept of Christian medieval society as the imitation of the mystical body of Christ to be one of the ideological principles used to underpin anti-Semitic expulsions: the Jews, who, unlike the Christians, were not limbs of the body of Christ, could be accused of violating this sacred space—a space that was conceived of as synonymous with the political body of the *civitas*. He also mentions differences in the civic status of Jews in those European communities that relied more heavily on Roman law,

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[1] Struve, Tilmann. *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung im Mittelalter.* Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1978, 288; Schwiebert, E. G. "The Medieval Pattern in Luther's Views of the State." *Church History* 12, no. 2 (1943).

[2] In *Lucidarius*, the human body is used as a metaphor for the earth: "De mester sprach. De erde is geschapen alse eyn mynsche. De erde is alse dat vlesch. De steine hefft se vor dat beente. De wortelen vor de aderen. De bome vnde dat krud vor de hare, wenner de wind denne kumpt vnder de erde, so breken de aderen." Lucidarius, p. 24.

[3] Paxson, *Poetics of personification*, 51.

as compared to those that relied more on canon or gentile law: Jews were citizens under Roman law, while canon law excluded them.[4] This is an appealing connection, but it is difficult to apply to late medieval didactical literature because the metaphor of the body of Christ does not play a significant role, nor do other body metaphors that might function to assign the Jews a place inside or outside the body of society. In the case of anti-Jewish propaganda in particular, the metaphor could be employed even without a thorough exegesis, as will become clear from one of the documents about the 1492 Sternberg blood libel.

The medieval formulation of the body metaphor occurs both in a more or less purely political shape and in connection with the mystical body of Christ as a meta-level, illustrating the specific ambiguity of medieval metaphors: society can be explained using the image of a body, while at the same time it *is* the body of Christ. The concept of the Church as a mystical body with Christ as its head was fully developed in Boniface VIII's bulla *Unam sanctam*, with the result that body metaphors for the state were also explained, most prominently in *Policraticus* by John of Salisbury. In the middle of the thirteenth century, the term *corpus rei publicae mysticum* appears and is applied by political theorists to different political entities—in fact, as Ernst Kantorowicz has shown, the *corpus mysticum* played the same role as the modern juridical "fictitious person," thereby applying to diverse juridical forms such as the village, the county, or the town.[5]

In the few cases where lay didactical literature takes up the metaphor of the mystical body of Christ, it is in a more or less explicit anti-Jewish context. The first example is the treatise *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, which, as already noted, is a particularly fertile source that combines and adapts all of the traditional ordering images into a single text. As it is the only example of an exegesis of the body metaphor as a social image and also provides a fragmentary exegesis of the metaphor, the relevant passage will be quoted here at length:

> So is van noyt zu myrcken dat zum yrsten unser here Ihesus Cristus vnse heufft is, vnde der wil dat wyr alle syne gelidder syn. Vp dat wyr durch syne breyde mynne vnde gelouuen mit yme eyn lycham wurden, dem uns also

[4] Stow, Kenneth. "Holy body, holy society: conflicting medieval structural conceptions." In *Sacred space: Shrine, city, land*. Ed. Kedar et al., 151–171. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, ibid., 152.

[5] Kantorowicz, Ernst. "Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought." *The American Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (1951).

bequeme is anzohangen. Want sunder yn envermoeghen wyr niet, vnd dae durch moegen wyr werden vnd saghen dat vns gheyn dynck van ynsem ouersten heuffde scheyden sal, und wae wyr van yme aff gedeylt wurden, so syn wyr verlaissen vnd verworpen van dem leuendigen stamme in verdurrunge, und kalt van aller genaden. Also is unse lieue here Iesus dat heufft aller krystenre mynschen in der hilliger kyrchen in gemeyn vnd bysunder, dem men vnderworpen vnde gehoirsam syn moisz up die pene des ewigen doyts, lijffs vnde selen. Van deme heuffde vluyst aue alle vaderschafft, gewalt vnd oeuerschafft in hymmel vnd in erden, geystlichs vnd werentlichs staytz, in regerunge der konynckrijch, vurstendum, und regimente der stede lande vnde luyde bys up die vnderste gewalt vnde heyrschunge, in der sorgen der huyßhaldungen, na ordelicher gewalt Ihesu vnde synre hilliger kyrchen. Herumb myrck eyn yecklich mynsche in wilchem staede he geroiffen sy vnd begriffen. Deme also zu leuen vnd den zu halden, als he des gerne lone van gode vntfanghen sulde, in zyt so Ihesus sprechen will roiffe den wyrckluden, di gearbeyt hauen, yren loyn zu untfangen.[6]

[It is necessary to note that first of all our Lord Jesus Christ is our head, and he wants us all to be his limbs. So that we through his extensive love and faith become one body with him, which it is pleasant for us to belong to. Since without him we can do nothing, and through this we can become and say that nothing shall part us from our head, and if we are parted from it, we will be lost and condemned from the living root to wither, and deprived of all grace. So our dear Lord Jesus Christ is the head of all Christian people in the Holy Church in general and, especially, he whom one is subordinated to and needs to pay obedience to by penalty of eternal death, physical and spiritual. From the head pours all fatherhood, authority and dominance in heaven and on earth, of the clerical and secular states, in the government of empires, principalities, and governments of towns, counties and people down until the lowest power and dominance, in the care of the household, according to careful power of Jesus and His Holy Church. So every person should know to which order he is called and standing. He shall live according to this and keep it, and he will happily receive the remuneration by God at that time when Jesus wants to say, call upon the workers, who have worked, so they shall receive their wage.]

This explanation of the Church as the mystical body with Christ as its head is taken up in the beginning of book III of *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, which deals with "the order of the subordinates." This placement is crucial for the interpretation of the body metaphor in the context, since its main focus is subordination alone with no reference to functionality, which was originally the main point body metaphors were meant to clarify. Consequently, only the head is mentioned and no other body

[6] Doernenkrantz, fol. 63v.

parts: instead, a descending hierarchy of power and virtue is described, from Christ through the emperors and kings and princes down to each household and its head. Interestingly enough, the pope is missing in the description of the governments, as are prelates and the clerical order in general, with no reference to its place in the body. On the other hand, a concrete exegesis of, for example, the head of the household or the king is missing—are they feet, heart, hands? The body metaphor developed in *Policraticus* was used to define different governmental and administrative functions as integral parts of a single organism, and was accompanied by the theory of the two swords, with the secular sword being subordinate to the clerical one.[7] This metaphor is still used in lay didactical literature, but has lost its original meaning. The explanation the text gives for the metaphor—the exegesis—aims instead to advance a Lutheran concept of a hierarchy of orders, with each of them including vertical strata of members. Another prominent feature of the body metaphor is also missing, namely, the interdependence of the limbs. The late medieval adaptation of the metaphor in *Doernenkrantz* adds a new focal point to subordination and obedience: the outer boundaries of the mystical body. The body is defined as the whole of Christianity or the Church itself, but there is the possibility of being Christian but outside of the body: falling from grace is the equivalent of being parted from one's head or being parted from one's roots, and therefore doomed to wither away (the body metaphor slips into a tree metaphor here). Falling from grace or being parted from the head can take two forms; either disobeying the Church—as is the case for sinners, apostates and heretics—or not being Christian at all, i.e. being Jewish, Muslim or pagan.

Although this quote is the only lengthy elaboration on the mystical body of Christ as a social image, there is one other example that does not focus on subordination, but on exclusion instead. The *Corpus Christi mysticum* as a social image connects the Christian sacrament with an anti-Jewish impetus not only in the religious sphere, but also in the political sphere. This connection hits its peak in the blood libels. The most popular one from the Middle Low German region was the story about the desecration

[7] John of Salisbury. *Policraticus: Of the frivolities of courtiers and the footprints of philosophers*. Ed. by Cary J. Nederman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, Book IV, Chapter III, 33–35. The significance of the two powers in John's text is not undebated, see Nederman, Cary J., and Catherine Campbell. "Priests, Kings, and Tyrants: Spiritual and Temporal Power in John of Salisbury's Policraticus." *Speculum* 66, no. 3 (1991), with further references.

of a host in Sternberg in Mecklenburg in 1492.[8] There have been reconstructions of the events based on the available sources, and the political and social implications of the Sternberg blood libel have been extensively discussed[9]—including the current presence of the pilgrimage objects from the blood libel in the Sternberg parish church[10]—and stories about desecrations of the host in general have been thoroughly analyzed.[11]

The Sternberg story starts with an impoverished priest who is said to have sold consecrated hosts to a Jewish family, who wanted to use them for entertainment at their daughter's wedding. When they stabbed the host in the midst of the wedding festivities, it started to bleed and rose from the table. Shocked by this turn of events, the mother of the bride returned the host to the priest, who—unsuccessfully—tried to hide it. The host revealed itself to a burgher, and the entire conspiracy was uncovered. The Jewish family who had organized the wedding and many of their supposed guests,—sixty-five people in all—were tortured, interrogated and had their "confessions" transcribed and diffused in printed broadsheets and books to provide evidence for the alleged course of events. Seven texts in the vernacular—and several others in Latin—presenting different versions of the incident were printed and diffused before 1500. There were also concrete consequences for the Jewish population: twenty-five men and two women were burned at the stake on the basis of the forced

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[8] The various German and Latin sources are described in Honemann, Volker. "Die Sternberger Hostienschändung und ihre Quellen." In Boockmann, ed. *Kirche und Gesellschaft*, 75–102.

[9] Backhaus, Fritz. "Die Hostienschändung von Sternberg (1492) und Berlin (1510) und die Ausweisung der Juden aus Mecklenburg und der Mark Brandenburg." *Jahrbuch für brandenburgische Landesgeschichte* 39 (1988); Mittlmeier, Christine. *Publizistik im Dienste antijüdischer Polemik: Spätmittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Flugschriften und Flugblätter zu Hostienschändungen*. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Lang, 2000.

[10] The objects shown today in Sternberg are a stone with the supposed footprints of Eleazar's wife, and a table where the desecration and stabbing of the host is said to have taken place. Bynum, Caroline Walker. "The Presence of Objects: Medieval Anti-Judaism in Modern Germany." *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 1 (2004).

[11] Rubin, Miri. *Gentile tales: The narrative assault on late medieval Jews*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, develops a prototypic narrative for these stories. See also Rubin, Miri. "Imagining the Jew: The Late Medieval Eucharistic Discourse." In *In and out of the ghetto: Jewish-gentile relations in late medieval and early modern Germany*. Ed. by R. P.-c. Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, 177–209. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995; Langmuir, Gavin I. "The Torture of the Body of Christ." In *Christendom and its discontents: Exclusion, persecution, and rebellion, 1000–1500*. Ed. by Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl, 287–309. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996. For the iconography of Eucharist torture, see in particular Zafran, Eric M. *The iconography of antisemitism. A study of the representation of the Jews in the visual arts of Europe; 1400–1600*. Ann Arbor, Mich., New York: UMI, 1973, 119–197.

confessions, followed shortly thereafter by the final expulsion of the entire Jewish population from the county of Mecklenburg.

One of the Middle Low German texts about this story provides an example of social imagery using the Corpus Christi. Jews and Christians are not presented as an explicit opposition; instead, an opposition between Jews and the Corpus Christi is semantically constructed. The Middle Low German text in question was printed by Simon Koch in Magdeburg in 1492 or 1493 and includes a short introduction outlining the story (fol. 2r–3r), followed by the entire text of the *Urfehde* (confession of guilt) of the accused and convicted priest Peter Then (fol. 3r–3v), and then parts of the confession of the mother of the bride, referred to as "the wife of Eleazar." An aspect of this particular blood libel that has possibly been to some degree underemphasized is the fact that, besides the usual male Jewish figures, a Christian priest and a Jewish woman are portrayed as perpetrators, which creates an opening for connecting the story to both anti-clerical and anti-feminist discourses.

The main focus of the text is the evilness of the Jews,[12] which directly threatens the mystical body of Christ, as stated in the opening lines:

> Ale man sy to wetten, de grote myßhandelinge vnde ôveldath De deme alderhôchwerdigesten waren hilgen lychamme vnses leuen heren Ihesu cristi, dorch de vorstockeden vnde blynden Jôden to dem Sterneberge geschen is. To hône vnde smaheyt deme almechtigen gode, unde to vorachtynge der hylgen Cristliken kerken.[13]
>
> [Everybody shall know the great abuse and cruelty which was done to the most venerable true Holy Body of our dear Lord Jesus Christ by the obdurate and blind Jews in Sternberg, to mock and despise the almighty God, and to the disrespect of the Holy Christian Church.]

The Jews are framed as if in direct opposition to the body of Christ: their act was an attack on this holy body, on God, and therefore on the Catholic Church itself. The alleged violation of the host draws its significance from the Catholic concept of transubstantiation, that the host really becomes the body of Christ, and as a result can feel, bleed and cry. It gains meaning from the metaphorical equation of the host and the Church as in the aforementioned *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, where Christ is called the head

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[12] Honeman also states that none of the sources on the blood libel of Sternberg focus on the miracle, instead focusing on the evilness of the Jews. Honemann, "Die Sternberger Hostienschändung," 92.

[13] Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament / Van der mysehandelinge des hilligen Sacramentes, fol. 2r.

of the Church, with all Christians as his limbs. The Jews, by violating the host, directly attack the Church, and consequently each Christian. The violent consequence of this construct is that every Christian must defend the host, the Church and himself from the Jews, with well-known results.

The figure of the mystical body of Christ is included in the introduction to the print edition addressing the 1492 Sternberg events, but the subsequent text does not identify the common Christian as the Church's defender. Instead, the Duke of Mecklenburg, *unserem genedigen herren Hertzog Magnus zu Mecklenburg*, who is the sovereign responsible for the town of Sternberg, and thereby its Jewish population, is mentioned in the second paragraph, and he is again invoked at the very end of the text as the protector of Christianity in general and the Christians of Mecklenburg in particular:

> Salich sy de landes Here, syne ynwoner vnde land welker land sodaner vorflokeden ôueldedigen Jôden mach vorhaff wesen [...] we deme efte den yennen, de se ôver thal vnde ordeninge der rechte holden [...] God deme almechtigen [...] to hône, smaheyt, schande vnde laster, vnde der gemenen Cristenheyt to schaden vorbedingen, beschutten, beschermen, geleiden, husen vnde hofen.[14]
>
> [Blessed is the territorial lord, his inhabitants and his county, which county is rid of such damned evildoing Jews ... woe to those who protect, defend or shelter them in large numbers or orders ... to mock, dishonor, degrade and debase God the Almighty ... and the entire Christian community.]

Thereby the metaphor of the mystical body of Christ is shifted from the level of the Church to the level of the secular government. Consequently, the main focus of the narrative is not on the desecration itself, but on the rising of the host after the priest tried to hide it and on the miraculous detection of the perpetrators and their interrogation and punishment.[15]

Christians only appear in the figure of the evil priest who sells the host to the Jew, so once again, the opposition is not presented as between Christians and Jews in general; instead, a triad is constructed, with the Duke of Mecklenburg on the one side, the evil priests and Jews on the other, and Christian society as a quiet bystander. In the context of the metaphor of the mystical body of Christ, this triad gains a certain meaning by focusing on the secular powers, which are addressed as the protectors of the Church and of Christianity. Christ is the head of the body and

[14] Ibid., fol. 6r–6v.
[15] Ibid., fol. 2r–2v.

the duke the helmet or the armor, providing protection for an unnamed entity—specific body parts or the specific members of the Church/state go unmentioned, with the only references being to the intruders—the evil priest and the Jews.

The fact that it is not a lay Christian, but a priest who acts as evil's helper in *Van der mysehandelinge des hilligen sacraments* is underscored by another story in which a Jew named Jacob is said to have confessed in the course of the trial that the accused Eleazar and others had already tried to buy hosts from a monk before the 1492 incident and, even worse, they had forced the monk to participate in their Passover rituals and possibly even to convert. The text is not entirely clear here, since the Jews both want the monk to convert and want him to retain his sacramental power, possibly in order to have continuous access to consecrated hosts. In the course of the ritual and with the participation of the Rabbi, the monk's hair is cropped, thereby removing his tonsure and obscuring his status as a clergyman. After a night in the company of the Jews, the monk confirms *dat he ewich wole eyn Jǻde blyven vnde in ǻrer Ee steruen* [that he forever wanted to remain a Jew and wanted to die under their law].[16]

The evil priests and monks are personifications of the absolute evil, their alliance with the Jews both necessary because of the distance of the fall it stands for and to establish the serious threat posed by Judaism. Given the constant fear of Christian-Jewish conversion expressed in canon law and catechetical literature, the defection of members of the clergy to the Jews would be considered particularly frightening: if the clergy lack sufficient faith to withstand the allure of the Jewish faith, how could lay Christians be expected to do so? The need to establish, clarify and maintain boundaries in order to protect Christianity is reinforced and culminates in an exclamation illustrating the connection of the concept of the Christian state as a body and its need for integrity:

> Wol deme Cristen volke dat nicht mit sodanen vnreinen hunden vormenget yß.[17]
>
> [Blessed are the people who are not mixed with these impure dogs.]

The fear of contamination due to the mixing of religions is derived directly from both the body metaphor and from the unity of evil priests and Jews against good Christians: the term *vnreine*, "impure," further serves both to

[16] Ibid., fol. 5r.
[17] Ibid., fol. 6v.

create a link between Judaism and a moral quality and to point out the transcendent aspects of the body metaphor.

The use of the Corpus Christi metaphor and the opposition between the righteous landlord, on the one hand, and the clerical traitors and Jews, on the other hand, calls to mind many modern anti-Semitic arguments that refer to an imagined "internal enemy." Even though Jewish and Christian spheres of life were widely separated—ghettos, distinctive signs, exclusion from craft guilds, etc.—"the Jew" is perceived as an internal threat to Christian society, not as coming from the outside. The Jew is foreign to the mystical body of Christ and the Church, but since this body is invisible and vulnerable, the Jew must be constantly removed to a greater distance. The real danger in this construct is, however, represented by the priests: while the Jews can be segregated and excluded by a decent secular government, internal enemies, those who trade the Christian faith and loyalty for Jewish money, cannot, and thus the Christian government and the Church must always be on guard.

The late medieval adaptations of the metaphor of the mystical body of Christ no longer work with a religious definition of Judaism, or at least such a definition is secondary. The main target of the metaphor and its anti-Jewish exegesis is the Christian population and its internal enemy. The same function is visible in the equating of Christian usurers and Jews, or the general equating of Jews with certain types of sins. In 1492 the Jews were finally expelled from Spain, an event considered a cornerstone of the transition from religious anti-Judaism to racist anti-Semitism. The consequences of this transition were both cruel to the Jewish population and crucial for Christian self-perception: each Christian was required to prove that he was not a Jew. Baptism no longer sufficed; proving oneself to be a good Christian required at least some evidence that one was not Jewish.[18] The rejection of the Jewish elements in the Christian faith as it is expressed in fifteenth-century lay didactical literature precedes this transition, as does the conception of the Jew as Christianity's internal enemy. To prove oneself a good Christian, ready for confession and contrition, one must question oneself to ensure that one has not secretly fallen from grace by committing sins that would qualify one for exclusion from Christian society—Jewish sins. For this construct of Jewishness as a marker

[18] The perpetual memory of this period in the contemporary ritual of Corpus Christi celebrations in certain Spanish regions is described in Molinié, Antoinette. "The Revealing Muteness of Rituals: A Psychoanalytical Approach to a Spanish Ceremony." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10, no. 1 (2004).

for sinfulness, or more generally for the lack of certain moral qualities, two tropes proved useful; the *Corpus Christi mysticum* metaphor—which was very rarely used in the texts, but was probably widely known given the popularity of devotional practices centered on the Passion—and the Jew-pagan opposition, which always points to the implicit prototype, the good Christian.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXOTICS: ALLEGORIES

As is the case with *revues des états*, all-encompassing allegories for society are rare and seem to be closely connected to certain textual traditions. One of them is a translated bestseller—the *Schachzabelbuch*—two others are Middle Low German originals. The chessboard, the mill and the ship, all used as metaphors for society in these books, do not appear in other religious didactical books from the region. These three books also belong to the minority of Middle Low German printed texts whose authors are identified by name. None of them, however, were published under a name. All three books qualify as edifying literature, but they have neither a catechetical nor a broader religious purpose. Instead, as is the case with those books that use *revues des états*, they fall between catechetical and purely entertaining literature and focus substantially on order-specific values and virtues.

The medieval texts that use allegories have been subjected to a tremendous amount of research. But the same problems apply to them as was the case for the Ship of Fools mentioned in the introduction: the limited number of these texts in the overall sample and, above all, the fact that these allegories, disconnected from the broader textual traditions of lay didactics, might diminish their relevance for late medieval ideologies. Even though the images of society presented here are striking and intelligible—primarily because they are images created to deliver a message and the authors made certain that people would understand them—they only appeared in single texts. This indicates that although the images used in these cases to describe society were known and were likely understood, they did not become common formulations and were not commonly used. One reason for this might be that two of the texts were written by laypeople, and it would have been unlikely for these to find their way into learned discourse: another reason might be that the images were flawed and had gaps that prevented the imagery from being easily understood.

VIII.1 *Technological Imagery and Personification: The* Boek van veleme rade

Mills, carriages and wheels belong to the traditional imagery used to represent progress in the modern age, but the metaphorization of society as different machines consisting of wheels in Middle Low German literature, as is the case in the *Boek van veleme rade* or *Radbuch*, is quite innovative. It was printed in two editions, in 1492/93 and in 1509,[1] a rhymed text that provides order-specific advice, and it combines the early examples of technological imagery, using a mill, a carriage and a plough as metaphor vehicles, with personifications—the miller and the wheelwright. The technological fragments are particularly interesting, since the machine as a dominant metaphor for the state did not become popular until the seventeenth century.[2] Considering that modern metaphors refer both to a more complex and more centralized state than was the case in the late medieval text, and that they use machines that were not known at that time (chiming clocks, steam mills, threshing machines), the interpretation of the wheel metaphor as technological imagery is open to challenge. Still, the basic functions of modern technological imagery representing the state—movement and functionality—are employed in the wheel metaphor in the *Boek van veleme rade*.

The text was published anonymously, but it was possible to identify former Braunschweig town scribe Hermann Bote as the author through an acrostichon made up of the ten main chapters and on the basis of certain similarities to another of Hermann Bote's works.[3] In another text, Bote calls himself a *hogrefe vom Papenteich*, which means that he probably worked as a tax collector in a small county north of Braunschweig in the years following 1488, after having been forced to leave the position of town scribe in Braunschweig as a result of a conflict with the local guilds. On the basis of his later works, the *Schichtbuch* and two world chronicles, Hermann Bote has been characterized by Herbert Blume as an "urban author" in connection with Kurt Ruh's definition of urban literature based

[1] See appendix under *Boek van veleme rade*.

[2] Peil, Dietmar. *Untersuchungen zur Staats- und Herrschaftsmetaphorik in literarischen Zeugnissen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart.* München: Fink, 1983, 489.

[3] Brandes, Herman. "Hermen Botes Boek van veleme rade." *Nd. Jb.* 16 (1890): 3; Wunderlich, Werner. "Hermen Botes Radbuch. Eine allegorische Ständedidaxe um 1500." *Colloquia Germanica* 19 (1986).

on the political-ethical points of view expressed,[4] in this case Bote's close association with his hometown and his defence of the positions of the city council against the demands of the lower classes.[5] Of his entire literary heritage, the *Boek van veleme rade* seems to have received the least interest in scholarly research compared to the chronicles, which have served as important sources of information about the social conflicts in fifteenth-century Braunschweig and, most of all, the *Ulenspiegel*, the most prominent example of Hermann Bote being part of a specific culture of satirical writing in the vernacular.[6] None of the texts ascribed to Hermann Bote by recent scholarship were published under his name.

Recent research on the *Boek van veleme rade* has focused on the author's social situation in the Hanseatic town, his expression of late medieval reformist thought and criticism of the Church,[7] as well as on characterizations of him as either a promoter of the scholastic and feudal ideology of *ordo*[8] or of an early capitalist and Lutheran mercantilist ethic.[9] Most of these studies take Hermann Bote's biography as a non-academic town scribe forced to leave his hometown during the 1488 uprising as a point of departure for interpreting and explaining his statements about the social order. His imagery, on the other hand, has been largely characterized as incoherent, incomplete and lacking in consistency between image and target domain.[10] Even though this characterization is justified, the *Boek van veleme rade* provides an important addition to an inventory of social imagery in the region, given that it makes the only attempt to develop a technological metaphor for society, a very early use of a metaphor that plays a comprehensive role in the modern era. Furthermore, in contrast to the tropes for society found in catechetical texts, the *Boek van veleme*

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[4] Ruh, Kurt. "Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung von 'städtischer Literatur'." In *Über Bürger, Stadt und städtische Literatur im Spätmittelalter*. Ed. by Josef Fleckenstein and Karl Stackmann, 311–328. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980.

[5] Blume, Herbert. *Hermann Bote: Braunschweiger Stadtschreiber und Literat; Studien zu seinem Leben und Werk.* Bielefeld: Verl. für Regionalgeschichte, 2009, 24–25.

[6] For a discussion of claims that Hermann Bote was the author of an original Low German version of *Ulenspiegel* and criticisms that reject the assertion, see Schulz-Grobert, Jürgen. *Das Strassburger Eulenspiegelbuch: Studien zu entstehungsgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen der ältesten Drucküberlieferung.* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999.

[7] Bräuer, Siegfried. "Hermann Botes Werk aus kirchengeschichtlicher Sicht." In Blume/Rohse, eds. *Hermann Bote*, 68–95.

[8] Wunderlich, Werner. "Nachwort." In *Hermen Botes Radbuch*, 141–160, ibid., 156.

[9] Baeumer, Max L. "Sozialkritik in Hermen Botes Werken." In Schöttker/Wunderlich, eds. *Hermen Bote*, 133–158.

[10] Honemann, Volker. "Die Stadt bei Johannes Rothe und Hermann Bote." In Blume/Rohse, eds. *Hermann Bote*, 24–42.

rade takes a more political approach to the issue, and it is possible that the target domain here is the state as a political structure rather than "society." As a consequence, the question must be posed as to whether the technological imagery, however ineffective and inconsistent it may be, calls for a more political concept of order and/or society.

The *Boek van veleme rade* conceives of society as consisting of five wheels, three of which constitute a mill. The factor underlying the employment of the wheel metaphor is the Middle Low German homonymy of *rad*, which means both "wheel" and "counsel" and is played with throughout the text, since the parenetical advice for each order is determined by its potential to serve among society's "counselors"—each wheel, that is, each social order, is judged based on its usefulness to society as a whole, a major factor defining usefulness being the potential of the order's members serving as counselors. Counseling here should be partly understood literally, meaning political counseling, and partly figuratively, indicating a general potential to serve society and be useful. This becomes particularly clear in those chapters that enumerate the socially useless groups such as women, children, gamblers, etc. The latter groups are described as useless and dangerous as counselors as they can only undermine the process of political decision-making.

Another characteristic of the imagery in *Boek van veleme rade* is the linguistic distance between the metaphor vehicle and the target domain. The different wheels forming specific source terms are only presented in the titles of each chapter: their names do not reappear in the text itself and thus remain disconnected from the exegesis of the entire allegory. There are two aspects to the explanation of the entire wheel allegory: the titles of the chapters and a description of the metaphorized group in each chapter. Concrete connections are not, however, to be found. We do not learn what a certain wheel does and how this applies to a certain group. There are no markers for the explanation such as "this is like" or verbs connecting the vehicle with the target domain. This makes technology a general topic for the metaphor, but the text does not make use of technological terminology. Instead, the metaphor is further explained using other metaphors, often proverbs, biblical exempla or personifications.

The metaphorization of society—or a certain segment of society—as a mill does not draw upon any identifiable source or model, even though mills in general were popular depictions of religious content in the German lands.[11] The ambiguous connotation of the mill as a place for sexual

[11] Thomas, A. "Mühle, mystisch." *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie 3*, 297–299.

deviance and magic is not part of Hermann Bote's allegory.[12] Scholarship has been divided regarding the origin of the allegory. Hermann Brandes sees a weak connection with a Middle Low German religious song about a milling stream.[13] The editors of the incunabulum do not identify a specific model for the allegory, but mention the biblical image of the mill as producing the bread of life for the believers, and the general importance of the mill in the life of medieval societies. The mystic mill was a popular image in church paintings, with Moses pouring the grain (the Law of the Old Testament) that is then ground into flour (the Law of the New Testament), which St. Paul collects in a sack. Another version of this image depicts a water mill that produces hosts, as a veneration of the central act at Christian masses.[14] For the mystic mill, the main focus of the image is not mill technology, but the grain and its milled form, as well as the people involved in the production. None of these play any role in the *Boek van veleme rade*; instead, the wheels themselves, as the main components of the technology, are the metaphor's focus terms.

Even though there is no direct model for the milling metaphor in the *Boek van veleme rade*, the mill as an important feature of daily life also made its way into the figurative language of lay didactical society; for example, in the Middle Low German *Lucidarius*, the mill is compared to the movement of the moon and the sun: just as the milling stone moves against the milling wheel, the moon and the sun move counter to the direction of the heavens.[15]

It was not until early modern times that technological imagery for social structures became widespread and popular, and the functions of technological imagery have for the most part been discussed in the context of examples drawn from discourses within industrialized societies. It is not surprising that these societies have developed and employed an abundance of technological imageries and metaphors for society (balloons, trains, clockwork etc.). In the *Boek van veleme rade*, however, the fact that technical imagery is prioritized over other known metaphors is surprising and raises questions about the overall existence of a compulsory metaphor for society in late medieval texts. Volker Honemann has collected the few instances of organological imagery in the *Boek van*

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[12] Wunderlich, *Hermen Botes Radbuch*, 149.

[13] Brandes, "Hermen Botes boek," 2.

[14] Delasanta, Rodney. "The Mill in Chaucer's Reeve's Tale." *The Chaucer Review* 36, no. 3 (2002): 271.

[15] "Dat mach me merken by der mollen, dar gheit de steen iegen dat rad." Lucidarius, p. 8.

veleme rade and compared them to the fully developed metaphor of the town as an organism found in the work of the chronicler Johannes Rothe from Eisenach. He has concluded that Hermann Bote was less able to formulate a consistent and relevant image of the late medieval town than his predecessor.[16]

This pejorative assessment of Hermann Bote's imagery and its shortcomings aside, the general idea of a technological versus an organological imagery for late medieval society is interesting and may not be quite as random as the outcome suggests. Karl Marx chose the mill as a major metaphor for the dialectical relationship between production and social change, connecting the hand mill to the feudal system and the steam mill to the capitalist system. The water mill was a major technological invention in the Middle Ages, and Marxist and neo-Marxist authors have consistently pointed to the connection between production and social struggles in the image of the mill presented in medieval texts as well.[17] The *Boek van veleme rade* marks a period of transition from feudal to capitalist forms of production and society, and the mill—which here could be either a water mill or windmill—is, in the Marxist sense, an exceptionally fitting metaphor for this transitional stage. Although the imagery sometimes lacks consistency, this aspect was not previously noted by scholars, even though Hermann Bote's important role in the social conflicts in Braunschweig has been widely acknowledged. The strange thing is that the mill is usually used as an image for social change and progress, but Hermann Bote uses it to support an entirely conservative and regressive concept of society.

The image of the mill takes up the first three chapters of the *Boek van veleme rade*; the first chapter deals with the milling wheel (symbolizing the clergy), the second with the cogwheel (emperor) and the third with the hoist wheel (nobility). The first two are said to work together, as do the two powers on earth, the secular and the ecclesiastical, while the third is said to support the former two in their exercise of power and represents the basic protection of the population. The entire allegory in *Boek van veleme rade* consists of two times five wheels of which the first five represent those groups that work for the smooth functioning of society. The first three are combined into an overall picture of a mill that requires

[16] Honemann, "Stadt," 24–42.

[17] Rigby, Stephen. "Historical Materialism: Social Structure and Social Change in the Middle Ages." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 3 (2004).

these wheels if it is to function properly. The other wheels leave behind the allegory of the mill, the subsequent two being metaphors of a carriage and of a plough. The remaining five are only partly identifiable and represent those groups that undermine and destroy.

Given the portrayal of a medieval mill, either the author of *Boek van veleme rade* has no real clue as to how a mill works or he only focuses on parts of the mill in order to point out certain factors. The *molenrad*, "milling wheel," is the part of the mill that one can see from the outside: it is driven by the water flowing through a small river, and several other wheels and stakes are required for power to be transmitted to the inner section of the mill. This entire machinery is absent from the image: as a result, the external, visible section of a mill becomes the most prominent representation of society, but its connection to the rest of the machinery remains mysterious. The milling wheel is also called a "water wheel" (*waterrad*), and, as such, the "milling wheel-clerical order" metaphor is elaborated to include "water wheel-ecclesiastical power."[18] This double use of imagery is repeated in the text and blurs the meaning. Also, the river driving the milling wheel is the vehicle of a double metaphorization; "the Tiber shall be the stream,"[19] and Scripture, "since Scripture is the flood."[20] While the Tiber, as the central river in the city from which the Holy Roman Empire and thereby secular power derives its legitimacy, refers to the empire's political structure, the use of Scripture likely points to an ecclesiological reading of the image.

To make the milling wheel as a metaphor vehicle more cohesive, the *cirkelbaghen*, "circle bows," the inner wooden bows that make up the wheel, are mentioned. They are not specific persons, but represent the Golden Rule.[21] The pope, cardinals, bishops, prelates and the High Master of the Order of St. John in Rhodes are mentioned as specific persons and as representatives of the entire clerical order/ecclesiastical power, but they are not assigned a specific part of the wheel. These two aspects of the imagery in the *Boek van veleme rade* are maintained throughout the text: instead of assigning specific representatives of the metaphorized order specific parts of the wheel, additional factors are introduced, and many parts of

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[18] "Dat de geistlike acht moge in dogeden syn." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 4a. "Dat waterrad schal wesen de geystlike acht." Ibid.

[19] "De Tyber scal wesen de stroem." Ibid., fol. 4a.

[20] "Wente de beke dat is de hillighe scrifft." Ibid., fol. 4v.

[21] "Hebbe gode leff unde den even mynschen dyn." Ibid., fol. 4b.

the metaphor are given a double assignment of target terms in the same chapter.

In the *Boek van veleme rade*, the pope does not appear as a separate wheel in a separate chapter, and therefore he does not have a position that is as prominent as that which he holds in the *revues des états*, for example. The pope's task—Christian unity and peace with the emperor—is partly addressed in connection with the emperor himself, and partly in the chapter dealing with the clergy. The popes of the 1480s and 1490s, Innocent VIII and Alexander VI, were probably not even considered good examples of guides for Christianity in contemporary opinion, as their simony, bribery and debauchery were widely known; both popes left a number of descendants for whom they procured Church offices. The emperor, on the other hand, warrants his own wheel within the imagery. He is the only single person who also represents an entire order in the overall concept of the *Boek van veleme rade*, which otherwise focuses on groups, not on representatives. The typological model for him is Charlemagne, because he expanded the empire and forced many people to convert to Christianity. The main duties of an emperor are maintaining the peace, establishing jurisdiction and *salicheit*, "good fortune."[22] These assigned responsibilities are disconnected from the mill imagery. The emperor, *kamrad*, "cogwheel," is part of the mechanism for transmitting power: it is a wheel with wooden teeth that usually interlocks with at least one other similar gear running in the opposite direction. Instead of developing the imagery of the mill by using all its components, only those who make up the wheels are referenced in this context: the electoral princes and prince bishops are the addressees of the chapter on the cogwheel, not the emperor himself. This clarifies an interesting feature specific to the use of the mill allegory in the *Boek van veleme rade*: technological imagery is only used as a vehicle for personifications, while the machinery's important forces remain the people who build and control it.

The most obvious parts of the mill—the largest wheel on the outside and the largest on the inside—symbolize the highest representatives of power, the clergy and the emperor who make Christianity work. Their only support, within this imagery, comes from the nobility, the hoist wheel (*windelrad*), described in terms of virtue, since "virtue makes a

[22] Ibid., fol. 8r.

nobleman."[23] This is the first major break with the mill imagery, because a mill is driven either by water and a milling wheel or by manpower and a hoist wheel. The third possibility is a windmill, where the hoist wheel is used to position the blades in the right direction for catching the wind. The decision not to have more than two crucial components of the mill represented shapes the way the imagery is used: the *molenmester*, "millers," (the clergy or the patriarchs) are the ones who actually build and run the mill, and they are asked to use only two wheels, secular and ecclesiastical power—this might be an artefact derived from the image of the mystical mill, with Moses and St. Paul as the millers.[24]

The use of technological imagery instead of organological imagery reflects a desire to depict society as something that works without a single head, or where the head or leading person is not the most prominent factor, in any case—in a mill, the miller is nothing without the crushing gear: he might not even be a miller. However, the fact that a mill actually has components besides these three wheels complicates the use of the imagery. Furthermore, the metaphors for entire orders and for single representatives get conflated in the imagery of the wheels, with additional components only mentioned en passant. The cogwheel and the crushing stone, which keeps running smoothly thanks to the common efforts of the milling wheel, are meant to represent Christianity in general—with the entire mill representing Christianity as well.

> Wen sik de mit deme waterrade voreent, unde se alle beide der hillighen kerken deent, wo wol denne de overste steen gheit, unde in der cristenheit denne wol steit![25]
>
> [If this (the cogwheel) conjoins with the water wheel, and both of them serve the Holy Church, how well the upper stone then runs, and how healthy Christianity then is.]

Several aspects of the mill metaphor remain disconnected from the target domain, but in some cases the author connects the specific functions of the wheels mentioned with the characteristics of the metaphorized group. This primarily occurs when one group's characteristics are being compared to those of other groups. The nobility, the winding wheel

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[23] "Eynen eddelen man maket sine doghet." Ibid., fol. 9r.

[24] "Gy molemesters, wen gy to rade gan, unde willet darup sinnen unde proven, wat gudes rades gy to der molen behoven. Se scal hebben twe rade unde nicht meer." Ibid., fol. 4r.

[25] Ibid., fol. 7r.

(*windelrad*), has the basic duty to protect towns and monasteries, and because of that, it is presented as a male order, since

> Neen perth, noch water, noch wind, noch vrouwe, noch maghet, noch kind, de dut windelrad kone handelen unde wenden, sunder starker mannes vote unde mit eren henden.[26]
>
> [No horse, nor water, nor wind, nor woman, nor maiden, nor child can handle and turn the winding wheel, but strong men's feet and with their hands.]

It is doubtful that men are actually better at running a wheel than horses, water *and* women, but the basic point is made: the similarity of source area and target area lies with their exclusiveness; in this case, gender and status. The boundary between the imagery and a literal reading is blurred: the nobility consists of strong men, and only strong men can run the mill. This, en passant, is also a statement about the place of women in the nobility: as it is determined exclusively by political functions, they are clearly excluded.

The Carriage and the Plough

The literal versus figurative reading of the central term *rad* also opens the way for other connected imageries—the metaphor of the carriage in chapter V (fol. 13a–16a) and of the plough in chapter VI (fol. 16b–18b). The carriage is an extremely common metaphor that is still used in modern German, but in Hermann Bote's use of it, only the wheels are important to the imagery, while the other components of the carriage—the wagon bed, the horses or the engine, the coachman or driver—do not play any role. The chapter is entitled *dat waghenrad*, "the carriage wheel," and basically describes the production process of the wheel, its materials and features. *Rademaker*, "wheelwrights," who are held responsible for the smooth functioning of the wheels, are frequent addressees. While they remain mysteriously anonymous, the wheels themselves are presented as the town, especially the towns of the Hanseatic League, and the text presents a quite unique perspective about these. The author wants the emperor to protect the towns from the greedy grasping of the local nobility and landlords, while the discord among the leading groups in the towns is seen as the basic problem that weakens the position of the towns. The amount of space this chapter takes up in the book—five entire pages—proves the

[26] Ibid., fol. 9v.

centrality of the topic. The *Boek van veleme Rade* seems to be the only late medieval metaphorical text on social orders that does not conceive of the burghers or the urban upper classes as a group but rather the towns themselves, with a special focus on the Hanseatic towns. Since this makes for a metaphorical description of the late medieval Holy Roman Empire, with a particular focus on the Hanseatic League, this aspect of Hermann Bote's work has often been addressed in scholarship.[27] But in the overall context of the *Boek van veleme Rade*, the admonition of the towns derives from its goal of providing an idealistic description of a *res publica*, and in that context forms of rule and administration are more interesting than social groups or estates. Thus, the mandate assigned to the towns does not differ from that assigned to the pope and the secular rulers: ensuring unity, avoiding discord in order to maintain the ability to act and to negotiate, avoiding heavy taxation and electing judges and administrators who are not susceptible to bribery.[28] Furthermore, the misdemeanours the author assigns to the different groups do not really differ: all of them must beware of hatred, disunity and envy. The overall purpose of the book could be described as a political admonition directed to both noble and urban rulers.[29]

The wheel imagery leads to the next related vehicle, the plough. Again, the type and quality of the wood used for making the plough wheel is the focus. The dualistic concept of the metaphor presents the peasant both as the plough's producer, who must know which materials are to be used, and the plough wheel itself, small but steady. In contrast to the other vehicles, the plough wheel image focuses on where it is out of place, rather than what its function is: it cannot be attached to a mill or a carriage, if they are to run smoothly, just as their wheels are useless in a muddy field.[30] All of the divergent metaphors are bound together by the divergent images of the wheel, each of which is made in a particular form for a specific purpose and is of a precise quality. As such, function is the

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[27] Examples collected in Baeumer, "Sozialkritik," 140.

[28] As a negative example the author chooses Pilate, who is said to have been defrauded by "eyn luttik hates, en wenich states." The story about Pilate having become rich off the money in the Temple is not included in the Gospel, but is handed down in the historiographic books by Tacitus, Flavius Josephus and Philo of Alexandria.

[29] This estimation stands in contrast to earlier research, which pointed to the importance of the admonitions directed at the towns and concerning the Hanseatic League. It has been proposed by Baeumer, "Sozialkritik," 140.

[30] "Dat plochrad kann de molen nicht ummedryven, Dat molenrad kann in den acker nicht raden, den buren is dat latyn verbaden." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 17v.

main focus of the metaphor, not the internal distinctions between the machines. The peasants basically serve to illustrate the principle of social order as presented in the trifunctional scheme: each order has its position, its rights and duties, and disorder results if any of the members cross the boundaries. No reevaluation of the position of the third estate is implied here, as the description of the peasant's natural duties shows:

> Arbeiden schaltu unde waken,
> Dat dy de hals moghe knacken,
> Unde laet den raden, dede raden konen
> Du schalt deme des nicht vorghunnen.[31]
>
> [You shall work and wake, until your neck breaks, and let those do the counseling who can. You shall not envy them this.]

The metaphorization and description of the peasants as an order in their own right in the *Boek van veleme rade* partially explains the absence of agrarian work and urban workers in lay didactical literature: the urban population as the primary reading public has been demarcated from the working third estate and transformed into one of the empire's political/functional units. The peasants alone are left as representatives of those who do not own anything, additionally serving to represent the bad reputation of physical labor and the related dirt.

The characteristics of *Katachresenmäander* are fulfilled: several fragments of metaphors are used and combined in a single semantic context, although the images do not fit together.[32] The metaphorical wheels are sometimes considered the focus term of the metaphor, while sometimes they are replaced by personifications such as the wheelwrights or the millers. The fragments are assembled following the same principle as the basic metaphor of the wheel; a polysemy of the word *rad* connected to the components of the order. The nobility includes dukes, and *grave*, "duke," also means "ditch." As such, the admonition of the nobility portrays them as a ditch surrounding a town and protecting it from enemies and besiegers.[33]

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[31] Ibid., fol. 18v.

[32] The concept of *Katachresenmäander* is discussed, for example, in Link, Jürgen. "Über ein Modell synchroner Systeme von Kollektivsymbolen sowie seine Rolle bei der Diskurs-Konstitution." In *Bewegung und Stillstand in Metaphern und Mythen*. Ed. by Jürgen Link and Wulf Wülfing, 63–92. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984.

[33] "Eyn grave het eyn bemaket vast, eyn dinck vor quader averlast. Wert eyn grave deep ghegraven, merket wat namen dat gy haven. Gy sint ghemaket graven overal, dat alle dinck ghelick beschuren sal." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 2r.

Generally, it is obvious that the technical imagery of the mill opens the way to certain dangers—an author not familiar with the technology easily loses his way in the metaphor. Additionally, if the author is primarily concerned with using the technological imagery to express functionality, the way in which the components actually work together should receive much more attention; otherwise, the metaphor remains mysterious or simply incomprehensible. The author of the *Boek van veleme rade* solves this problem by introducing groups that build and run the mill and assigning them the responsibility for its functioning, thereby pairing the technological imagery with personifications, which, in this textual context, appears more trustworthy. That the mill's largest wheels are the only parts seen as being worthy of mention and of being source terms for a metaphor for society expresses a deeply conservative view of society as reliant on its most powerful representatives. Compared to the organological metaphor, this reduced technological view of society might actually be more honest than the body metaphor: the *pedes rei publicae* are included as integral parts in the body metaphor, but the importance assigned to the feet does not in reality compare to the political importance assigned to peasants in feudal society. To effectively neglect all other social groups except for the rulers does not point to a feudal perspective, but to a view of society that slavishly follows authority of any kind, a view that is evident not only in the mill metaphor, but in the other sections of the text as well.

The main focus of the carriage metaphor is movement: similar wheels of good quality are required for the carriage to run smoothly, while additional or deficient wheels disturb the movement. The same factor, movement, is relevant for the wheels of a mill and the functioning of the crushing gear. In the mill imagery, the author mixes the responsibility for functioning—the millers, the water—in his analogy. Responsibility is equally unclear in the carriage metaphor: there is no analogy provided for the wheelwrights, who are very prominent in the text—are they the city councils, the landlords who founded the city, or the town's population in general? A basic characteristic of the wheel imagery is that the specific parts of the wheel are not ordered on the basis of a functional hierarchy; they are all equally necessary for the wheel to be stable. Consequently, the internal hierarchies of the orders are overlooked in the allegory—although Hermann Bote admittedly placed a strong focus on questions of power and authority, his imagery did not clarify on which level he placed authority, who was responsible, or how they gained legitimacy.

Malfunction

The second section of the *Boek van veleme rade*, the chapters on the five useless and disturbing wheels, only partly takes up the technological imagery. The last chapter on the "broken wheel" in particular only addresses the problems such a wheel would cause in a mill, in a carriage and on a plough—the influence of liars and thieves, extramarital affairs and bad friends on the clerical order, the nobility, the towns and the peasants. In this last chapter, the full potential of the wheel imagery is touched upon: there is a risk of the malfunction and breakdown of the entire machine if one piece is broken, and that applies to all machines used as metaphor vehicles. The influence of thieves and liars can cause the breakdown of the entire community and is equally dangerous to all orders. There is no need for additional personifications in this section, the question of who has broken the wheel is not addressed: instead, the people responsible for the distress are directly metaphorized as the broken wheels on the specific machines.

The same principle is used for another wheel among the useless ones, the bobbin wheel embodying children and immature counselors and politicians. The term *spolrad* evokes a weaving loom or a spinning wheel: the related woodcut shows a wheel and axle on a bench. The chapter explains the bobbin wheel's lack of bearing capacity and its unfitness for any of the machines described, but the analogy only goes so far. The negative implications of the wheel as a means of power transmission and the children as counselors are cryptic. "You *spolrad*, you are of no use to anyone"[34]—whatever wheel the author was originally referring to was surely useful for something.

The imagery of the *dryffrad*, "driving wheel," is also somewhat disconnected from the more fully developed parts. It might be found in the mill as a means of power transmission between the water wheel and the inner mechanism, but the description in the *Boek van veleme rade*—one that is handmade from lead and formed like the stone in a mustard mill that can

[34] "Du spolrad, du bist neme to nutte." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 22v.—The other "disturbing wheels" do not easily fit into the imagery either, partly because it is impossible to decode their function in the medieval technological sphere. A *sparenrad*, "chevron wheel" or "spur wheel," for example, looks more like a six-tooth star than a wheel in the woodcut illustrating chapter X on the fools—which makes sense in the metaphor, because it would be foolish to build a wheel that is not circular. However, the term is not documented elsewhere and it is impossible to determine if the thing with the six spikes actually was used in any machine, and thereby to fully decode the metaphor.

be easily employed—speaks against this interpretation. The description of the driving wheel as "both good and bad" and the associated people, women in general, differs substantially from modern technological imagery for the state, where the driving mechanism generally embodies the governing group or head of state, or even political power in general.[35] The first connection between the driving wheel and women is, once again, the material, not the function: it is supposed to be made from lead, which is soft and heavy at the same time, just like a women's advice.[36] The entire chapter then lays out well-known anti-feminist stereotypes: women talk too much, they do not have consistent opinions, they cannot keep secrets and so on. The analogy of the driving wheel as a necessary and formative part of a machine and the woman as an important member of society is not lengthy, which may also be because the driving wheel is not part of or connected to any of the other machines mentioned, even though a mill definitely has a driving wheel. The illustration associated with the chapter, three women standing around a cube with a wheel on top of it, tends to disconnect the driving wheel from the other metaphors rather than connecting it to them.

Finally, the wheel of fortune (chapter XI), embodying, well, fortune, leaves behind the technological imagery entirely and instead uses a well-known metaphor for a group of people as a principle. Rulers are advised not to use the wheel of fortune—the devil and black magic—in order to increase their good luck because of its short-lived nature, as well as the related dangers.

Overall, the combination of technological imagery and personifications in the *Boek van veleme rade* makes for an original if somewhat disorganized contribution to the social imagery of the time. The basic principle of the metaphor—and thereby the basic requirement of the social orders—seems to encourage running smoothly and remaining in the place where one belongs and can fulfil one's duty. The "disturbing wheels" break entirely with this principle of metaphorization, since only the broken wheel fits into the general idea of a machine running smoothly on a suitable wheel, while the others are entirely disconnected. It is not even clear why they are considered disturbing in the wheel metaphor, in any case, as opposed

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[35] Peil, *Untersuchungen*, 499–506, after texts by Josef Görres, Montesquieu, Jean Arnoux and others.

[36] "Unde is van blye, saturnusmetal / Unde hefft in sik sulves eynen swaren val / Unde is licuol weker nature in sik, / Heit, kolt als eyn oghenblick. / Eynes wyves raet is weick unde swaer, / Dat vinde gy in er openbaer." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 19r.

to in the general social context. The negative influence of women, children, thieves and black magicians is well established in other metaphorical and literal portrayals of social deviance and uselessness. It is almost surprising how the author Hermann Bote fits hegemonic assignments for most social groups into a metaphor that, if used consistently and coherently, speaks against these hegemonic assignments; for example, granting women the role as initializing means for power transmission, not as bad counselors. The internal and external boundaries of society are equally unsurprising, but they also barely fit into the analogy.

Considering these flaws in the analogy between the metaphor vehicle and the target area, it is little wonder that this technological imagery based on the wheel was not considered a winning concept in the contemporary literature and was not taken up in any of the other texts.

The question of the target area of the entire text is not easily answered. The categories conceived of as internal to society are the clergy, the emperor, the nobility, the towns and the peasants, while women, children, magicians, fools and thieves are conceived of as external. This indicates a pronounced focus on the politically active and influential groups as constitutive for society's internal dimension. Factors that favor exclusion are related to morality, gender and age. The division between the two groups of five is based on usefulness versus uselessness for the functioning of society. Besides this division, the introduction (chapter I) in particular also establishes a division between rulers and subordinates and introduces an inward vertical hierarchy of the separate orders.[37]

Overall, the *Boek van veleme rade* is situated on a spectrum running from an allegory for society to an allegory for the state, without marking a clear boundary between the two. The empire as a political structure with electoral princes and imperial towns and their mutual interconnection and obligations are the main focus of the text. The primary similarity between signifier and signified is consistently function and movement, which is also the case in the other allegorical text from the sample, the book of chess.

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[37] "Eyn iewelk de holde sik na syneme State, / De pawes baven de papen. / De keyser baven vorsten unde knapen. / De vorsten baven rede unde stede, Eyn iewelik na sineme trede." Boek van veleme rade, fol. 3r.

VIII.2 *The Chess Game*

Few older texts were so stable in their use of metaphors for human society that they were taken up without considerable changes in late medieval printed literature. The only example of a high medieval political and religious didactical text used in Middle Low German print production is a translation of *De ludo scachorum*, originally written in Latin by Jacobus de Cessolis and disseminated in several German versions, the most popular of them by Conrad of Ammenhausen. Overall, the chess metaphor as a metaphor for human society is not among the dominant and widespread concepts in the Middle Low German region, neither in the incunabula nor in the manuscript tradition, similar to the rare or non-existing intertextual references to the ship metaphor in the corpus.

The chess books were extremely popular in the German lands during the fourteenth century, and even later on in print, both in verse and in prose. The broad reception of the text by Jacobus de Cessolis in the Upper German area—and in other European countries—had no counterpart in the Middle Low German language area: this provides further evidence of the specific selection criteria for Middle Low German incunabula literature.[38]

The Middle Low German text is an independent rhymed version by Stephan of Dorpat (Tartu), printed in Lübeck by Matthäus Brandis around 1490.[39] The Conrad of Ammenhausen version of the book of chess was translated and printed in over fifteen editions in Latin, English, German, Dutch and Italian despite its obvious flaws in terms of fluency and readability resulting from the transition from a spoken to a written form.[40] For once, however, the Lübeck printer did not turn to a model text from the rich Dutch tradition or use a High German model for the translation, but went back to a manuscript originally written in Middle Low German: the rhymed version of the book of chess by Stephan of Dorpat. Only a fragment of the possible manuscript model text, which can be dated to the

[38] A survey of the different German adaptations and reworkings of the Latin original can be found in de Boor/Glier, *Die deutsche Literatur*, 85–91.

[39] De ludo scachorum [Low German] Dat schakspel to dude. [Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, about 1490]. GW 6531.

[40] Küenzlen, Franziska. "Lehrdichtung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit. Die Bearbeitung von Jacobus' de Cessolis Schachtraktat durch Konrad von Ammenhausen." In Lähnemann et. al., eds., *Dichtung und Didaxe*, 265–283.

last third of the fifteenth century,[41] has survived—the text itself is said to be composed in the middle of the fourteenth century.[42] The long period between the composition of the text and its diffusion as a printed book, as well as the extremely restricted manuscript tradition, makes the chess book another exception within Middle Low German print production and within the tradition of the books of chess.

The Middle Low German rhymed version is connected to the dominant tradition of moral parenetics (*Tugendparänese*). In addition, the rhymed version by Stephan of Dorpat differs significantly in structure and form from the common editing practices for chess books in the vernacular that are not based on the Latin tradition.[43]

The introduction of the chess game as an allegory for Christian society has been interpreted as a sign of a sociocultural shift in the direction of an understanding of authority that was based more on coercion than on physical power and violence, especially in comparison with and opposed to the otherwise popular metaphors of the body, where all the parts were subordinate to the head. The chess game, however, also reinforces the idea of a general need for order and subordination.[44] The chess allegory combines political theory with moral philosophy and order-specific virtues, and it became increasingly popular in the many different vernaculars while the body metaphors remained within the learned discourse. The chess game addresses both the individual as a member of society and the sum of individuals in toto: each of them is acting independently and is independently responsible for their own salvation, as well as for the functioning of the state.[45] The chess game formulates a closed system

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[41] Temmen, Mareike. "Der erste handschriftliche Zeuge des Schachbuchs Stephans von Dorpat—ein mittelniederdeutsches Fragment in Krakau." In *Literatur, Geschichte, Literaturgeschichte: Beiträge zur mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft*. Ed. by Volker Honemann et al., 895–915. Frankfurt am Main, New York: P. Lang, 2003.

[42] Factors speaking in favor of this are the dedication of the text to Bishop Johann of Vifhusen, who was bishop of Dorpat in 1357–1375, and the identifying of the author himself. Besides the book of chess, a Middle Low German version of the *Disticha Catonis* is also ascribed to him. Beckers, Hartmut. "Stephan von Dorpat." *VerfLex* IX, 290–293.

[43] The differences between model text and adaptation are listed in Plessow, *Mittelalterliche Schachzabelbücher*, 86–87 and 159–160. He analyzes for Stephans and other German adaptations a tendency "den paradigmatischen Charakter des lateinischen Textes zugunsten eines syntagmatischen Zugs zu beschränken." Ibid., 95.

[44] Honemann, Volker. "Das Schachspiel in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Zur Funktion des Schachmotivs in der Schachmetaphorik." In *Zeichen—Rituale—Werte*. Ed. by Gerd Althoff and Christiane Witthöft, 263–283. Münster: Rhema, 2004.

[45] Adams, Jenny. *Power play: The literature and politics of chess in the Late Middle Ages.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006, 20–21.

for society with a fixed number of participants and fixed rules for their location and movement—which limits the potential of different authors and text versions to assign different target terms for the metaphor and its components.[46]

However, two features of the chess allegory are striking: it addresses a society without a clergy, and the pieces move according to specified rules. In the Conrad of Ammenhausen version, a cleric uses the chessboard to develop a mnemonic trick that the king can use to learn about the duties of the different orders: the clergy, thereby, presents itself as the teacher and master of the rulers and can, as a result, be excluded from the allegory, as the clerical order is not meant to be ruled over by the secular powers. In the Middle Low German version, on the other hand, there is neither an illustration[47] nor any other reference to suggest that the author of the book is a cleric or to establish the clergy as the educator. As a result, this aspect is completely absent from the allegory. The focus on the king and the nobility in general as the text's addressees does, however, remain consistent.[48]

The didactical purpose, similar to that of a mirror of princes, remains on the level of individual chess pieces and their movements, but leaves aside the overall goal of the game; to protect one's own king and kill the rival king. In contrast to the body allegory, the chess game has a goal, which is pursued throughout the various phases of the game—the opening, the middle game, the end game. These stages are not addressed in the Middle Low German version, which instead focuses on the position and movement of the pieces, in a figurative sense: what is permitted for certain people but not for others and the boundaries within which the members of the various orders move.

The division of the text into books and chapters also differs from the structure of the model text. The Middle Low German *Schakspel to dude* is divided into four books with 108 chapters: in the printed version the

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[46] Oliver Plessow has pointed out the limitations of reading the books of chess as mirrors of the respective socio-political circumstances due to this fixed source domain of the metaphor. Plessow, Oliver. "Kulturelle Angleichung in den Schachzabelbüchern des Mittelalters." In *Chess and allegory in the Middle Ages: A collection of essays*. Ed. by Olle Ferm and Volker Honemann, 57–97. Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia, 2005, ibid., 65.

[47] In several manuscripts of the Ammenhausen version, the chessboard is depicted with a king and a cleric on each side.

[48] "Den eddelen luden dat wol mach temen / dat spyl, vnde dar by merke nehmen / Wo dat se schicken vnde raden laten/Mit wysheit ere vnder saten." Dat Schakspel, fol. 1v.

chapters are provided with subtitles. The structural division of the books suggests a tripartite division of society: Book I, *Van deme schaek spele* [about the chess game], deals with the king and queen; book II, *van den olden* [about the nobles], addresses other noble groups; book III, *van den vinden* [on the paws], enumerates a list of professions and groups among the third estate; book IV, *van dem gantzen brede vnde van den toghen vnde velden* [about the entire board and the moves and the fields] describes the movements of the pieces.

Although a significant amount of research has already been conducted and published regarding books of chess in Latin and in the vernacular, in the context of this study two aspects remain of interest; the boundary between rulers and subordinates as expressed in the Middle Low German chess allegory and the position of women based on the prominence of the piece representing the Queen in the game, which stands in contrast to the insignificant position of women in most other metaphors for society.

The Middle Low German *Schakspel* treats the top two representatives of the nobility, King and Queen, as a separate order: the appearance of a female figure does not seem to pose any problem here at first sight. Female nobles are not included in the traditional functional division, partly because they do not fight, and partly because women's participation in the order is generally open to debate as a result of their limited options for exercising direct political influence. When using the chess game as an allegory, however, the queen must be included, and consequently, the "real" queen receives more attention than usual in the associated moral didactics. The chapter on the queen does not, however, deal with the duties of female rulers, but with those of women in general, as is made clear by the exempla, which feature women who lack a clear social status.

Because the Queen is equated with all women, those who are completely excluded from most schemes are, paradoxically, part of the highest order in the chess book. The exempla address common stereotypes about women and remove the queen from the political sphere: women are portrayed as poor counselors only capable of providing harsh advice, and incapable of remaining silent and keeping secrets—exactly the same stereotypes as appear in the *Boek van veleme rade* and in the *Henselyns bok*, which points to an unbroken tradition of anti-feminist thought on the part of both clerical and lay authors. The exempla about the chastity of the queen draw upon another tripartite division: the queen is married to the king, the exemplum of Anna is a reference to a widow who does

not wish to remarry and Lucia militantly defends her virginity against a planned marriage.[49] Thus, all parts of the lay female tripartition are addressed.

The requirements of the queen—remaining morally upright and teaching her children to do so as well—in themselves lie outside a specifically female field of action: a paragraph is inserted that includes an exemplum in which it is specified that the king can and must also play a role in educating their children. In the traditional definition of a functional division of orders, women simply have no independent function that would justify explicitly including them in a group. The final paragraph about the queen once again makes clear that she does not represent a ruler in this context, but is simply a woman:

> Hir merke yo an de koninghinne
> Unde dencke vor wat se beghinne
> Ik mene ok alle eddele vrouwen
> De in dogheden willen rouwen
> Dat se de kuscheyt hebben lef
> So komen se in der eren bref.[50]
>
> [Listen up here, queen / And think before you begin something / I mean all noble women as well / Who want to rest in their virtue / And love chastity / Then they will receive the letter of honor.]

The indifference about the position of women found in traditional images of society is reflected and reinforced in the *Schakspel*, since it must address the queen as a prominent member of the game, while simultaneously attempting to combine her description with clerical and lay anti-feminist resentments. The question of female authority is basically avoided by reducing the queen's duties to nothing more than general virtuousness and by equating the piece representing the queen with all women and their duties. Even raising the children is portrayed as a duty shared by the king and the queen.

Despite the absence of the clergy in the *Schakspel*, a tripartite division is retained by dividing the nobility into two, calling to mind Bourdieu's description of the division of the modern middle class into intellectuals and entrepreneurs set in contrast to the workers.[51] This is different from

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[49] Chapter XIIII, Uan ener vrouwen de nicht swighen konde; XV, De vrouwen scholen kusch sin des en exempel; XVI, Van ener wedewen de heet anne vnde van lucien.

[50] Schakspel, fol. 21v.

[51] Bourdieu, *Distinctions*, 252.

other adaptations of functional divisions in the Late Middle Ages: usually the differentiation of the *laboratores* poses problems due to the lack of clarity around the position held by merchants and urban administrators. On the other hand, a division of the rulers is not generally required, as became clear in most of the catechetical books.

The chess game as a metaphor requires a more differentiated view on the elites as most Middle Low German lay didactical books provide. The second order in the *Schakspel* consists of the three other noble figures; knight, bishop and rook; in Middle Low German *oldere* (elders, symbolizing the judge), *riddere* (knights) and *roghe* (probably a confusion between rook and bishop, as the illustration shows a messenger, similar to the bishop in German chess, which might derive from the etymology of *roghe(n)*, "to move"—in any case, the piece symbolizes a royal administrator or legate). Together with the king, these figures resemble the organization of a royal court in feudal society, an area which otherwise is not represented in the lay didactical literature from the corpus.

The specific moral didactics assigned to the rulers are the usual ones: the judge should be impartial and not accept gifts, the knight is supposed to protect the peasants and the rook is the mighty counselor and the king's messenger. Here it becomes clear that although the chess allegory absorbs the functional ascriptions of the trifunctional scheme, it does not attach the importance of formative categories to them. The author uses the term *olden* both for the single figure and for the entire group of three: the exempla make it clear that by these three—judges, knights and legates—he means the functional elites of feudal society in an intermediary position between king and people.

The third order, the pawns on the chessboard, is the group in which major variations occur in the various reworkings of the *De ludo scachorum* by Jacobus de Cessolis.[52] One obvious explanation for this is the fact that the pieces have no individual characteristics: another is that representations of the third estate in particular also shifted the most in other medieval texts containing metaphors for society. In the Middle High German prose version, the individual pawns are defined by their assigned places on the chessboard: merchants and physicians are placed in front

[52] Kramer, Karl-Sigismund. *Bauern, Handwerker und Bürger im Schachzabelbuch: Mittelalterliche Ständegliederung nach Jacobus de Cessolis.* München: Dt. Kunstverl., 1995, compares the imagery for the pawns in the German manuscripts and the prints from Augsburg 1477 and Lübeck 1499.

of the King and Queen, while the outlying positions are held by peasants and gamblers. This hierarchical order is still present in the Middle Low German verse version, with the pawns presented in eight chapters, moving from the right side of the board to the left. The groups are, in this order, peasant and winegrower, blacksmith, wool weaver, merchant, pharmacist, innkeeper, urban administrator, robber and gambler. It is noteworthy that gamblers, who in the catechetical literature are considered to be in a state of constant mortal sin, and as such outside of human society, are featured here—the chessboard has no outside, so all groups that the author wants to deal with must be dealt with as pieces.

The division of the pawns seems to be specific for the Middle Low German version of *Schakspel*: it does not, however, break with the other metaphors for society and their representations of the third order. The inclusion of gamblers and the absence of Jews clarifies the target area—Christian society including "bad" Christians.

The immense popularity of the chess allegory in the Middle Ages is surprising, as it ignores a social imbalance: the chessboard is too narrow for a representation of the clergy, so to speak. Theoretically, clerics would have to be placed among the back row figures alongside the nobility and the ruling couple, and their function and position would need to be defined and described more clearly, as is the case, for example, for the *olden*. There are two conceivable solutions to the problem posed by the discrepancy between existing social groups and the figures on the chessboard. The clergy could have been assigned one of the major pieces, for example, the bishops, and then the functions and attributes of the knights and rooks could be aligned accordingly. Presumably this solution was not favored, because the chess allegory relies on the relationship between the various pieces and the king and their obligation to protect the king, which would require the clergy to be subdued by the king. The second possible solution would have been not to have made the central positions of the king and queen a heterosexual couple, but rather representatives of the secular and spiritual powers, defined as the pope and emperor, each with a parallel group of aldermen arrayed to the right or left of the pieces. Since the queen has such a clear gender identity in the Middle Low German version, with an upper position in the hierarchy implied, in this particular formulation the two powers would have been classified and ordered by gender. This approach to the problem serves to depict the impossibility of metaphorizing equality and corresponding power within gendered metaphor vehicles. It is possible that it also

depicts the impossibility of metaphorizing a complete equality between the ecclesiastical and secular powers.

The book of chess and the chess allegory in general were created as didactical tools for the rulers in a feudal society. The Middle Low German version was written in the land of the Teutonic Order, where an ecclesiastical authority was simultaneously the secular authority; Stephan of Dorpat did not write his rhymed version in the historical context of a fully developed feudal society. Nothing is known about the reception the text received or the degree of its diffusion at the time of its production, likely indicating that it failed to gain popularity, probably because of the dominance of the Teutonic Order in all cultural and religious matters. 150 years later the *Schakspel* was printed in Lübeck, again in a historical situation that was not reflected in any way in the image of society presented in the Book of Chess. We have little idea of what popularity this book gained in Lübeck or in the other northern German Hanseatic towns, but we do know that it transmitted a distinct noble ideology, and this remained the case in the Middle Low German adaptation. The text should definitely be classed in the tradition of translated bestsellers, even though the actual Middle Low German version was not exactly a bestseller. While it probably satisfied the oft-documented aspirations of the Hanseatic mercantile burghers to adopt and imitate noble culture, it failed to provide a suitable basis for reader's self-identification and engagement, which analysis suggests is the essential function of the image-text interaction in the German books of chess in general.[53]

[53] Urban, Melanie. "Visualisierungsphänomene in mittelalterlichen Schachzabelbüchern." In *Visualisierungsstrategien in mittelalterlichen Bildern und Texten.* Ed. by Horst Wenzel and Stephen C. Jaeger, 139–166. Berlin: Schmidt, 2006.

CONCLUSION

A SCIENCE OF (UNACCOMPLISHED) POSSIBILITIES

> Nur dem Geschichtsschreiber wohnt die Gabe bei, im Vergangenen den Funken der Hoffnung anzufachen, der davon durchdrungen ist: auch die Toten werden vor dem Feind, wenn er siegt, nicht sicher sein. Und dieser Feind hat zu siegen nicht aufgehört.[1]

The fifteenth century is a crucial period when it comes to explaining the various Reformations in the German lands, and it is also crucial for our understanding of this specific period of the German *Sonderweg*. Thomas A. Brady began his study on the German Reformations with scattered examples of "claims of uniqueness and incomparability" regarding the German people, joining his work to various other attempts to explain why the Reformation happened in Germany. In his case, the events he addresses begin in 1400.[2] Shortly before his death in 1940, following his escape from fascist Germany, Walter Benjamin, occupied with a different outcome of the *Sonderweg*, demands a similar approach; that the events to come not be forgotten when interpreting a period in the past, and that the remnants left by the victors be seen as nothing more than documents of oppression.[3] On different grounds, both conceive of the historian's profession as a science of possibilities.

As a prelude to the sixteenth-century Reformation, the late medieval sources produced by the Catholic Church read both as the remnants of a lost and fallen glory and as an effort to save a system of power in a period when it had already run its course and the ruptures and cracks in its façade were far too visible. At the same time, as documents of the clergy's claim of exclusive access to religious knowledge, a claim that they maintained both before and after the events of the 1520s, they carry the burden of a

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[1] Benjamin, "Thesen," VI, 695.

[2] Brady, *German Histories*, 7.

[3] As most other messianic drafts, also Walter Benjamin's *Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte* have suffered severe dismantlings lately. See the review of the recent critical edition of the various manuscripts welcoming the postmodern dissolution of "philosophy's holy text" into a number of fragmentary, sometimes blurry, always desperate thoughts and claiming the necessary re-interpretation of Benjamin's central terms. Matz, Wolfgang. "Der Engel der Editionsphilologie muss so aussehen." *FAZ* 2010-03-08.

tradition of domination, violence and oppression that stretches back centuries. In the late fifteenth century, lay didactical literature was produced at the point of intersection of these two notions, partly as translations of purely clerical texts, partly as anonymous compilations by laypeople, printers or town scribes, with the exclusive control of religious education no longer being maintained and the texts no longer entirely of a top-down nature. In this light, lay didactical literature documents the "weak messianic power" that took shape during the 1480s and 1490s even if the limited nature of its radicalism and its capacity for emancipation seem disappointing, given the enormous potential of the genre and the means of production. Lay didactical literature, read as a scattered, partly repressive, partly permissive corpus of widely differing texts, represents the thinking of those who would not in the end prove to be victorious: it contains not only their conception of an alternative to the conditions they found themselves in and a painstaking proposal for a more righteous society, but also the imprint of all the inequalities that the oppressed carry with them. The liberation of urban elites from the dominance of the Catholic clergy did not mean the liberation of their wives and servants, but, nonetheless, their representation in the vast output of lay didactical literature opened the way for fundamental social change. However, as it inevitably used the language and the linguistic forms inherited from the Catholic Church, it in part repeated and intensified ecclesiastical and governmental claims for repression and, above all, it continued to advocate for the exclusion of those who were already excluded.

In the case of the late fifteenth century, leaving aside the events to come means reading lay didactical literature as the documents of an ideology that did not yet know of its coming decline. This raises questions that are crucial if this period is to be freed from the interpretive scheme that has been endlessly forced upon it, namely, whether certain aspects, ideologies and thought figures were "still medieval" or "already Reformatory." In the case of the fifteenth century, neglecting the events to come does not amount to sympathizing with the victors; rather it means presenting the Catholic Church and its believers as a heterogeneous and contradictory group consisting of both winners and losers, oppressors and oppressed.

In this study of social imagery in fifteenth-century lay didactical literature, I have tried not to focus on the events to come, without, as a result, siding with the various victors. The methodological approach I used to achieve this was to study the semantics of power using a fixed corpus of sources that shared similar sites and modes of production and distribution—incunabula and early imprints—and a common language—Middle

Low German. Given the necessity for an armamentarium for the analysis of widely differing phenomena, a structuralist concept of rhetorical forms was used to identify the social imagery found in didactical literature. This approach has two advantages. First, it determines the choice of a specific image for the social order not only on the basis of textual tradition, but also on that of function—while tripartite divisions, such as *oratores, bellatores, laboratores*, are not only part of learned discourse, they also function differently than binomials such as clergy-laity or man-woman. Both the choice of representatives and their mutual relationships, as they are grounded in the rhetorical form, are observed. The definition of social imageries as rhetorical forms, along with the demarcation of a fixed corpus, allows for statements about the qualitative and quantitative importance of certain images. Second, this makes it possible not only to analyze the functions of the image for society, the signifier, but also to determine how these influence the understanding of the signified, society itself. This allows for a focus on the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion contained in each rhetorical form and its context. The mystical body of Christ and its anti-Jewish implications are one example, and the exclusion of women from the upper ranks of society in binomials such as lord-servant or clergy-laity is another: in this image, women are always conceived of as servants and as laypeople, and are thereby symbolically excluded from positions of authority. Even though there is only a handful of texts with more developed images, metaphors and allegories for society in the corpus, the definition of smaller rhetorical forms as images for society clears the way for their denaturalization: social imagery consists of figurative speech, even if the image presents itself as a faithful reflection of reality. A third advantage to the analysis of social imagery as rhetorical form is that it allows for a focus on the importance of linguistic images for historical research: language is not simply an effect of reality; rather it shapes reality, its perceptions and its power relations. It also is our only way of seeing a reflection of the historical image, *das flüchtig aufblitzt*.

Different Ideologies, Different Discourses

Lay didactical literature from the Middle Low German region has proven itself to be a unique genre from a specific cultural area. The number of texts produced and their textual traditions both contradict and complement the history of early book printing as we know it from the southern German lands. That the success of the Reformation would later be both

swift and far-reaching in the Middle Low German region suggests even more strongly the existence of a cultural area that differed from the rest of the empire and warrants being examined outside of a linear narrative of the empire as a political and historical entity. The "claims of incomparability" should probably not be questioned regarding supposed differences between Germans and others, but between Germans and Germans, who, after all, did not even speak the same language. The northern Hanseatic towns probably had more in common with the coastal areas in the Baltic and in Scandinavia than with Strasbourg or Nuremberg. This, of course, depends on which points of reference a comparison is based upon, and unfortunately we know far too little about the diffusion of the books and texts to be able to treat the circulation of lay didactical books as an indicator of the dimensions of the Middle Low German cultural area.

However, what we know about this book production is itself distinctive: the great number of texts in the vernacular produced in Lübeck and Magdeburg compared to the numerous Latin texts printed in Cologne and in the south, for example, as well as the preference for texts originally and anonymously produced in Middle Low German as opposed to the translated bestsellers that dominated print production elsewhere. It is of some interest that no Latin model text could be identified for any text from the corpus—all translations prepared for Middle Low German print production used vernacular models, either from the Low Countries or from the Upper German area, especially Augsburg.

Dividing the texts into Middle Low German originals, on the one hand, and translated bestsellers, on the other hand, has provided a useful albeit not exclusive means for distinguishing the different discourses and ideologies addressed in this study. Clearly, there are certain distinct aspects that generally serve to demarcate these two types of texts; creating legitimacy and authority for the texts, identifying an author, using imagery and metaphors from learned discourses or from vernacular textual traditions: all of these have proven to be characteristic of traditional clerical or lay/urban/burgher-supporting discourse, promoting the ideological interests of different social groups in different instances. There are, however, also aspects that are common to these two types of discourses: anti-Jewish resentment, the focus on authority in general, and the concept of society as a closed and hierarchically ordered unit. Two broader types of ideology that encompass these ideologemes to different extents and that serve to sustain power relationships between social groups are also clearly distinguishable: a traditional clerical ideology derived from feudal society

and from learned discourse that supports the clergy and the nobility in their claim to authority, while largely ignoring the "third estate" and its needs, as well as a more "progressive" and potentially egalitarian ideology (regarding the relation between laity and clergy and their mutual rights and privileges, that is) that supports the urban elite in its claim to authority and to independence from noble landlords and powerful cathedral chapters and calls for an overall redefinition of the boundary between clergy and laity. Although necessarily clichéd and unevenly sketched—What is a traditional high medieval ideology? What is the influence of the Church Fathers, scholasticism and canon law and how, if at all, are these aspects unified into a coherent ideology?—the existence of two discourses with specific ideological biases is obvious in late medieval sources. The political and social status quo in the fifteenth-century Hanseatic towns was sustained by different ideologies that supported different social groups, the greatest antagonism being between the clergy and the urban administrative authorities such as the city council, mayors and judges.

This is not terribly surprising, but it is nonetheless interesting that the political antagonisms that arose from urban daily life were also mirrored in a very traditional and hierarchical genre where unmitigated support for clerical predominance would have been expected—instead, we find what are more or less subtle "anticlerical" strategies even in religious didactics, which don't necessarily question existing clerical privileges, but definitely reevaluate the relation and hierarchies between clergy and laity.

The distinction between these two ideologies and the discourses that perpetuate them is obvious in most cases, and it can be followed through various characteristics of the texts: whether or not they are translations, how close they are to a Latin learned discourse or a vernacular urban discourse, and whether or not they identify an author and a specific addressee. The anonymous and original Middle Low German catechetical compilations usually contain several characteristics differing from the translated bestsellers, one of them being the replacement of a clerical author's name for authorization with a metaphorical presentation of the book itself as a means for salvation. The different discourses correlate to different discursive characteristics of the book production and textual authorization.

On the other hand, it is rare that an entire book contains only one of these ideologies and that form or discursive characteristics and ideological footprint coincide entirely, utterly disturbing the clear assignment of clerical and lay urban, burgher-supporting ideology to traditional

translated bestsellers or anonymous Middle Low German compilations and their literary genres. *Imitatio Christi*, a distinguished translated bestseller with a compilatory structure, includes serious redefinitions of social hierarchy and diminishes the overall importance of monastic life for salvation. *Speygel der leyen*, an anonymous Middle Low German original, is presented in the form of a traditional teaching dialogue and forcefully advocates the laity's claim to salvation independent of a priest. The form and structure of a book cannot be taken as a sign of its ideological persuasion: traditional forms such as the *summa*, the sermon or the teaching dialogue can be used to advance progressive ideologies, just as the typical late medieval forms of didactical literature—compilations and catechisms—can be used to express traditional ideologies. The same is true for social imagery.

Social Imagery and Linguistic Images

As much as a certain regularity of the results would be desirable, assigning the social imagery developed and employed to specific discourses is entirely impossible. Both clerical and lay urban ideologies use traditional metaphors and other rhetorical forms in order to express themselves. The presence or absence of functional tripartition does not automatically indicate either a traditional or a progressive discourse: innovative social imagery does not always correlate with political innovation. There are, however, obvious trends: both moral and functional tripartitions are extremely rare in the corpus. When they are used, they tend to equate the clergy and the nobility and incorporate lay administrative governments into their concept of authority, as was the case in the incunabulum *Doernenkrantz van Collen*, which intermingled secular and clerical authorities. If tripartite forms are used, the metonymic representatives are not chosen on the basis of uniform reasoning—moral, functional or otherwise—instead, diverse forms of reasoning are interwoven, with only the number three remaining as a common denominator and a reminder of pure tripartite divisions—if such a thing ever existed.

In the search for traditional tripartitions, it was necessary to trace their terminology on the basis of the various translation processes and, even in that case, it became obvious that certain semantic categories were not available to Middle Low German didactical literature. *Bellatores*, for example, broadly meaning the nobility in a feudal society, did not coincide with any of the "second estates" in the Middle Low German texts: in the place

of fighting, authority exercised by laypeople and the clergy became the main distinctive feature. However, some term related to domination was always used to designate the second estate. The same process of dissolution of meaning is also visible in the case of terminology used for moral tripartition.

The terminology of moral tripartition, *virgines—coniugati—continentes*, seems to have lost its meaning entirely as a result of the focus on married laypeople and the multiple semantics of virginity, which can denote men and women living in monasteries, young women who have not yet married, or a general state of moral grace. Moral tripartition and the metonymic representatives underpinning it provide an example of a social image that lost its meaning when the historical and textual circumstances changed: in a literary genre specifically intended for lay education, a form used to legitimize the clerical order is no longer meaningful. Thus, all the metaphors and narratives traditionally used to expound moral tripartition—the parable of the sower, the three righteous men—are no longer used or are interpreted in a new way, one that always favors the married order and includes a general focus on the importance of authority. In the few cases in which complete tripartitions or the terminology developed for the representatives in them are used, they are always part of a traditional discourse: in *Ynkere to gode*, a tripartite division of monastic people emphasizes their moral superiority, and in the translated bestseller *Hemmelsche funtgrove*, the three Marys standing at the Cross personify righteous Christians. Tripartite models for society seem to be clearly connected to a learned discourse and thus only occasionally find their way into didactical texts in the vernacular.

Again, there are some exceptions to the rule that the assignment of certain images to certain discourses is impossible. The *revues des états* seem to be typical features of Middle Low German originals. They are based on metonymic representatives, but potentially in the form of extensive lists that lack the focus on mutual relationships that is characteristic of both tripartite forms and binomials. Furthermore, even though they occur in both Latin and vernacular textual traditions relevant to lay didactical literature, they are used in texts that have no connection to Latin learned discourse whatsoever. *Licht der seelen* is the only example of the use of a *revue des états* that resembles the order-specific confessionary interrogations of the mendicant guidebooks for priests.

All the other handbooks for confession and books of mirror either disregard this specific form of metonymic representation altogether or use it only in very short text passages meant to criticize a specific segment

of society. This points to a strict demarcation between the two potential functions of *revues des états* within different discourses. In the tradition of the mendicant order's *cura animarum*, the *revues* represent extensive collections of potential penitents and how they are to be interrogated, always leaving the person central to the confessional situation—the confessor—out of the equation. These lists do not adhere to a hierarchically descendant line, and they assemble their representatives on widely differing bases: age, civil status, gender, and profession, usually excluding the clergy. This differs in the vernacular tradition of *revues des états* that derive from the dances of death: here the main feature of the rhetorical form is the proposed list of representatives meant to encompass all of humanity, thereby promoting a concept of equality in the face of death or the Last Judgment. Using the same form, but different content, the Lübeck version of the dance of death provides the most prominent example of a *revue des états* in the Middle Low German sample. It does not seem to have had much of an impact on other texts: the *Henselyns bok* is the only other book structured around a list of representatives from different social orders, and it is equally removed from learned discourses.

The case of the *revues des états* and their use in didactical texts is the same as that of the fully-developed metaphors for society: they have been the object of numerous modern studies, but within the Middle Low German sample, they remain single examples of images that are disconnected from the rest of the didactical text tradition and its social imagery. The Middle Low German original *Boek van veleme rade* and the translated and adapted *Narrenschyp* and *Schakspel to dude*, were distributed in single editions and provided metaphors for society that were not used in other texts, and thus cannot be seen as widespread and typical of fifteenth-century social imagery in the region.

Assigning certain forms to certain discourses is more relevant—and more realistic—than explaining the changed political realities underlying the dominance or disappearance of certain forms, since they were never constructs uniquely suited to a specific historical reality. Late medieval rhetorical forms did not abandon functional tripartition because it no longer suited reality—how could a group of three representatives encompass an entire society that, even by the Early Middle Ages, was more complex than acknowledged, and which had allowed for a far greater number of possible social states? Functional tripartition was of no importance in the Late Middle Ages, because its substance—a clerical ideology that also supported the nobility—was no longer pertinent in the existing political

circumstances. Another basic feature of tripartite forms was also unnecessary in the context of urban lay didactical literature: the differentiation of the elite into two separate groups and their demarcation against a third, lower order. Whether this actually means a decline and thereby a qualitative and quantitative change compared to social imagery dominant in earlier centuries cannot be answered from the material investigated in this study—as the assumptions by previous scholarship regarding the dominance of tripartite imagery could not be verified from the Middle Low German material, a reinvestigation of the validity of similar assumptions for other periods and regions is desirable.

The rhetorical forms that were used most extensively, oppositions and binomials, derived from urban legal and normative texts and, as such, from a vernacular and secular tradition that was adapted for religious purposes. They receive much of their suggestive power from the interconnection of various binomials, even if it is difficult to decide which is the most basic; the distinction between lords and servants or the closely related man-woman binomial, with the gender order thereby constituting an underlying structure of power relations that also provides the other power structures with meaning. Binomials are characterized by the dialectical relationship between the two poles and by the instinctive identification of a superior and an inferior pole in the opposition. Lord-servant, rich-poor, husband-wife, Christian-Jew, all of these function according to these principles, and together they form potentially endless lists of interconnected binomials and clear hierarchical assignments—but there is one exception: the good-evil or wicked-virtuous binomial disrupts the hierarchy by disrupting the interconnection of related binomials. "Husband", "lord" and "rich" are the upper poles in their respective binomials, but they are not automatically good. Here, the promises of inversion of the Sermon on the Mount find their clearest evidence in symbolic form: the order of virtues exists parallel to all social orders, and its presence in all religious contexts points to the existence of a parallel order of power relations as well—never fulfilled in real life, though.

The parallelism of the social order and the order of virtues is also clearly visible in the vernacular adoption of the motif of the nine choirs of angels, which surprisingly was one of the most popular ones in Middle Low German didactical literature. Originally developed as a metaphor for the ecclesiastical hierarchy, with eight choirs reserved for the different clerical ordinations and the lowest one left for the entire laity, the same image was used in the fifteenth-century vernacular tradition for an exegesis

of different Christian virtues and their hierarchically ordered value for salvation—a salvation that was open to all Christians, with clergy and laity equally represented on the basis of their merit, not of their status.

This disruption of the social order is of particular interest when it comes to the clergy-laity binomial. Traditionally the clergy claimed a superior spiritual status based entirely on their ordination and social position, and the identification of the clergy with the superior pole in the opposition was evident and went unquestioned. What was questioned, however, was the identification of the clergy with a superior moral status, and the relationship between the two poles—what originally had been conceived as a complementary antonym with a sharp line between clergy and laity had become opposites with a gradual transition between the two. This conceptual shift in the clergy-laity binomial was introduced by the focus many of the lay didactical texts placed on "all Christians" instead of on certain groups among the Christians.

All Christians

Most of the images for society that are used frequently in lay didactical literature are applied flexibly in the discourses in which they appear: the nine choirs of angels and the different binomials cannot be assigned a specific ideological imprint; instead, they are used throughout the texts with different objectives and in different combinations. In the case of the nine choirs of angels and the lord-servant binomial, the shift from a social order to an order of virtues is particularly visible: when employed in translated bestsellers, these forms serve both to legitimize clerical authority and to assign the clergy a specific moral status: when used in Middle Low German originals, they disrupt the connection between specific social groups and a particular moral status assigned to them, focusing on "all Christians." The rhetorical figure of "all Christians" in itself represents an image of society as an imagined egalitarian group of people simultaneously united by their political structure and their faith and internally ordered on the basis of a hierarchy of virtues that applies to all of them equally—in fact, though, it becomes clear that this image assigns a greater potential for living virtuously to some groups than to others, even though God would not make a difference. Symptomatic of this was, for example, the quotation from *Speygel der dogede*, which claimed that God made no difference between the genders, and that virtuous women would be

counted as men and evil men as women. The standards raised by God did obviously not always coincide with the standards raised by men.

The clergy, however, is not the social order supported by this construct; instead, economic wealth is a major factor that allows people to live according to the law. The wealthy and well-educated urban elites have the means to read and contemplate their faith, to give alms and to keep holidays and fast, while the poor lack these options. This is potentially a breeding ground for the idea that economic success is a sign of God's grace, an idea that became a prominent feature of Protestantism and must have been generally appealing to mercantile societies.[4] It is also a direct result of the strategy of applying monastic rules to laypeople as far as possible, of defining parenetical advice as equal to the rules of monastic orders and so on.

While crucial for the redefinition of the relationship between clergy and laity, the focus on "all Christians" had no impact on the general relationship to and presence of authority. To the contrary, an emphasis on the need to obey secular authorities is included in all social imageries used in lay didactical literature—it may be based on an exegesis of the Fourth Commandment, it is contained in the hierarchical concept of all binomials and it is usually one of the crucial points found in tripartite forms and their definition of functionality: the *bellatores* are replaced by rulers in general, be they prelates, mayors or kings. Nonetheless, the frequent use of the rhetorical figure "all Christians" points to a shift of emphasis from the order-specific virtues known from parenetical books directed to virgins, princes or others to the establishment of a general and overall order of Christian virtue which fulfilled a specific function in the promotion of an urban lay ideology. Interestingly enough, the rhetorical figure "all Christians" can be read and applied in both directions when it comes to the requirement that "all Christians" obey, fulfil their order-specific duties and contemplate the Last Things and their equality in the face of death: intended in clerical ideology as an instrument for assigning the laity a

[4] This conclusion is obviously inspired by Max Weber or, rather, he has made similar observations and deduced the connection between Protestantism and capitalism from it. Weber's argument that "modern" capitalism did not arise before the Protestant and Calvinist Reformations has been subjected to intense criticism, as has his neglect of Judaism in the context. Cf. the survey of criticism and appreciation of Weber's "Protestantische Ethik" in Sennett, Richard. *Der flexible Mensch: Die Kultur des neuen Kapitalismus*. [München]: Goldmann, 2000.

subordinate place, it could be used in urban lay ideology as a wagging finger directed at the clergy: *alle werden fallen*.

The Order of Virtues and the Social Order

Fifteenth-century didactical literature in the vernacular was indeed a mixture of forms derived from different discourses, suitably adapted for urban societies. The strongest indicator of the dominance of urban lay ideology in a given text is the emphasis on an order of virtues instead of a social order: regardless of birth, ordination and power, every Christian has certain obligations and rights, and every Christian has the same potential to achieve salvation. This ideological construct appears quite egalitarian and progressive, even anachronistic at first glance, but in the textual context it becomes clear that it merely serves to support urban lay governments and their order-specific virtues in contrast to clerical and noble claims to power—a general examination of wealth and authority is not to be found in this ideology. As has so often been the case in history, both as regards the peculiarities of German history and otherwise, the rhetorical figure "all" is best translated as "white/Christian, male and middle class," when it comes to the potential for salvation of "all Christians."

In this sense, lay didactical literature remains an entirely hierarchical genre, with little room for alternative concepts and unorthodox utopias. Anticipating radically progressive texts in this sample would mean overestimating both the potential of the writers and compilers of these books and the printing presses' enthusiasm for taking economic risks—it is generally observed that the early years of book printing were shaped by the necessary conservatism of the printers: they printed texts that had already proven successful in manuscript form. This general rule does not, however, appear to apply to Middle Low German print production—not only can we find truly heretical books such as the *Bokeken van deme repe*, a translation of Jan Hus' text that was prepared and printed in Rostock, but the majority of (surviving) incunabula and early imprints consists of anonymous compilations with no known manuscript model. This might partly be due to the lack of interest on the part of scholars in identifying the sources of these supremely stereotypical books, but it also points in part to the somewhat unusual and slightly more adventurous character of the lay didactical genre in this region. In the context of the basic and unquestioned framework of dominance and subjugation, of ruling and obeying, there are several obvious strategies for reformulating power

relations, especially regarding the importance of the clergy and of the local nobility. A number of these are reinforced by the parallel existence of an order of virtues that contradicts the hierarchical status quo, often with an allusion to the Last Judgment, not as an entirely new and revolutionary concept, but rather as a small taunt reminding the rulers of their endangered position.[5] Rather than openly raging against the misdemeanours of the Catholic Church and its clergy, the political instability of the Holy Roman Empire and the loss of autonomy to their landlords experienced by several urban centers, the order of virtues remains very vague about who in the end is to be favored. It remains unclear whether it really will be the poor and meek who will inherit the earth, or whether a new, more kind ruler will simply replace the current one. What the order of virtues does firmly establish, however, is the demarcation of those who are saved from those who are not.

Christian Society: Inside and Outside

Both traditional clerical and lay urban discourses are connected through a common ideologeme—anti-Judaism. This thought pattern is not connected to a distinct ideology, but appears more or less frequently in all texts. Consequently, it also constitutes a factor in many, if not all, rhetorical social representations: they either explicitly include Jews, such as the Jew-pagan binomial and some *revues des états*, or Jews embody the image's implicit other, Christian society's rarely mentioned but always insinuated outside. In analyzing this outside, the definition of social imagery as linguistic signs consisting of a signifier and a signified has proven useful: when the signifier comprises only the righteous among the Christians—as is the case with moral tripartition or with the nine choirs of angels—then the outside necessarily contains Christian sinners and Jews, pagans, Muslims and heretics. In general, however, only the first two are mentioned, which on the one hand points to the prevalence of anti-Jewish resentment and, on the other hand, gives form to a connection between Jewishness and a negative moral status, reinforced by the frequent use of formulations like "worse than a Jew" when describing potential sins. The close identification of Christian usurers and Jews, who allegedly share a

[5] This probably resembles what Robert Bast called the "crisis ideology" of the fifteenth century. Bast, *Honor your fathers*, 41.

common ground of immorality, adds to this notion of Judaism as a moral status rather than a question of faith, and the stronger this notion, the fiercer the anti-Jewish attacks in the context of lay didactics. Whether this intense anti-Jewish resentment is specific to the Middle Low German corpus is difficult to determine, since comparative studies of texts in the vernacular in other areas are lacking—however, in the case of the present sample of lay didactical literature, anti-Judaism is discernible as a major ideologeme present in all discourses, and not only in those texts entirely devoted to anti-Jewish propaganda such as those about the Sternberg blood libel. It is also difficult to say whether the exclusion that appears so prominently in Middle Low German social imagery is also a feature of older and newer social imageries that share its framework.

For the Middle Low German area at least, the definition of the internal social hierarchies seems to be just as important as the definition of its outer boundaries, providing an entrée for anti-Jewish resentment that compounds the frequent accusations that Jews murdered Christ and reject the truth of the Gospels. As such, this resentment is not simply a feature of certain texts or discourses, but is an integral part of fifteenth-century ideologies. Even without access to learned *Adversus Iudaeos* treatises or concrete accusations of ritual murder, anti-Jewish propaganda was always at hand and made up a considerable and very stable part of religious didactics although the ambiguities of the Jewish-Christian relationship never disappear entirely.

The linguistic form for this is not the Christian-Jew binomial, but the Jew-pagan binomial, with the Christian as the implicit counterpart. This phenomenon can be clarified by the dialectical, even intimate, relationship that is established between the two poles in a binomial, something that was probably seen as best avoided when defining the relationship between Christians and Jews. Furthermore, binomials express a hierarchy within an entity, not mechanisms of exclusion: as a comparison, the metaphor of the mystical body of Christ, which has functionality and exclusion as its main features, occurs very rarely in Middle Low German sources and can thus be assigned to learned discourse.

In the context of social inclusion and exclusion, the ambiguous status of Christian women is also important. It has been established that the gender order plays a central role in the overall ordering system of social imagery as a model for hierarchy and authority. The importance of married laypeople and of the *paterfamilias* in the symbolic order simultaneously codified the subjugation of women regardless of their social and civil status. In much social imagery, women represent a disruptive

factor or mark a crucial point in the conception of the order: the status of monastic and semi-religious women in both the clergy-laity binomial and moral tripartition is unclear. In the chess allegory, the queen represents women in general rather than noble or ruling women in particular. In the *Boek van veleme rade*, women constitute an order of their own, one which undermines the entire political order, an indication that anti-feminist resentments are also not ideologically distinct, but present in all discourses to various extents. The tendency to make women an order of their own is also visible in the *revues des états*—rather than determining women's social status based on their family's class, and thereby potentially challenging the unconditional nature of the gender order, social images allot women a position entirely distinct from the male social order. This mechanism makes it clear that both the dominance of authority as a relevant distinguishing factor and the general exclusion of women not only from society but from authority in general are consistent features in images representing the social order. Differences between women related to religion, status, wealth or age are of less importance—in this context, women are not only the "marked gender," but also the "marked order."[6]

Narratives of Legitimization? No, Thanks

It has been proven in this study that all the rhetorical forms considered to be dominant in the Late Middle Ages, based on their presence in both high medieval and early modern texts, were not prevalent in Middle Low German lay didactical literature: tripartite forms, allegories and *revues des états* all appear somewhat randomly and fragmentarily and seldom serve to structure and carry entire texts. There are a variety of reasons for this. To begin with, the rhetorical forms available derived from learned and clerical discourses that did not easily translate into lay didactical discourse in the vernacular. Furthermore, the dominance of an image in a certain genre and discourse has often been asserted not on the basis of repeated occurrence, but as a result of its appearance in single texts considered to be relevant and important, which inevitably implies a certain

[6] This in some ways contradicts the results Bernhard Jussen presents for thirteenth-century Latin learned discourse: women were not entirely absent or completely excluded from the ordering models; however, they were only represented in those models using a moral grading system and female terminology. Models for economic or organizational gradation (such as functional tripartition) only had male representatives or, more to the point, only used male terminology. Jussen, *Name der Witwe*, 319–320.

bias of and projection onto the source material. Such explanations for the absence of traditional rhetorical forms basically champion a form of discourse analysis and historical semantics that does not focus on certain key texts, but filters a larger number of texts in order to distinguish patterns in the use, transformation and frequency of certain images, thus illuminating the power of certain social models developed and established by particular authorities.

A third explanation for the lack of master narratives in lay didactical literature is of a more epistemological nature, touching upon the different functions of social imagery in different discourses. In a learned discourse, metaphors for society are narratives of legitimization. They are developed in order to illustrate and manifest a certain ideological construct, an image of society in the double sense of figurative description and political invention. Metaphors, personifications and other rhetorical figures are used to provide a construct with a logical and coherent image, to embed it in a biblical or philosophical narrative and thereby provide it with authority and legitimization. An example of this is the functional tripartition, a metonymic sample of representatives of society further reinforced by an exegesis of the three sons of Noah, and generally meant to support a hierarchical status quo in a dialogue between secular and ecclesiastical rulers that includes but does not address the third estate. This dialogue of binary elites is no longer required in lay didactical literature, which renders narratives of legitimization unnecessary. What society is supposed to look like, how the relationship between secular and ecclesiastical power is conceptualized and how this is grounded in Scripture—none of this was important in the context of religious didactics. There was only one thing that laypeople needed to know: they were subordinate to various powers and their primary duty was to obey.

This uncomplicated relationship required no narrative of legitimization, and as a result the rhetorical form most commonly used to represent the social order was the binomial, a basic form of superior and inferior, easily assigned to specific social groups and existing lines of demarcation and reinforced by the interconnection among all of the binomials in circulation. Rich and poor, man and woman, lord and servant, clergy and laity—none of these images for society are narratives of legitimization, they are simply manifestations of a hierarchical status quo. Their suggestive power does not lie in the narrative but in the high degree of normalization the image provides: of course society consists of men and women (and nothing else)! A pair of complementary opposites does not leave room for alternatives. It inevitably manifests the relationship between the two

poles as dialectical, hierarchical and mutual. Hence the focus on authority found in all binomials and other rhetorical forms and the concomitant dominance of binomials in general, both in lay didactical texts and in the urban legal and normative sources that have provided the comparative matrix for the examination of different rhetorical forms in this study.

For laypeople who were to acquire Christian virtue on their own, no legitimization of the empire's political structure or the eschatological order of the cosmos was necessary: they were simply taught to obey. In this regard, lay didactical literature is surely a remnant of the victorious that adds to the ideological oppression of the poor, working people, women and Jews. During the Reformation, the situation of the oppressed remained unchanged while one set of oppressors was replaced by another. Those who had formerly dictated the form and content of religious didactics saw their monasteries emptied and their cathedrals reorganized. At the same time, religious didactics were much more than pure remnants of a continuing rule of the clergy.

One of the mysterious concepts developed by Walter Benjamin in *Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte* was that of the "weak messianic power" inherent in all present times on loan from the past and indebting all humans to future generations. As this study has shown, paying this debt cannot consist simply of interpreting the past in the light of later events. The partly hierarchical and traditional and partly inversive and progressive genre of lay didactical literature is not important because it can cast a light on Luther's medieval roots—it is important because it deeply marked the last decades of the Middle Ages. Fifteenth-century lay didactical literature was an "agent of change"—to use the epitaph Heiko A. Oberman coined for late medieval anticlericalism—both regarding the social imagery used in the individual texts and in the entire production of incunabula and early printed books: in a dialectical relationship, it distilled orthodox clerical ideology while simultaneously working towards the clergy's abolition. Nobody knows whether the numerous religious books printed in the vernacular were actually read by laypeople, or if they were just pretty things to have on a shelf in order to demonstrate education and spirituality. Nonetheless, the sheer number of books produced for the religious self-instruction of laypeople and the fundamental shift in dominion over religious knowledge set in motion by this production must have had some impact on the relationship between the clergy and the laity as well as on power relations in general. The messianic power contained in lay didactical literature lies with the promise of individual access to salvation, regardless of birth, profession or education, a victory

of the messages of the Gospel promising a radical inversion of social status and order over centuries of clerical dominance, abuse of power and control. The price this promise exacted was in part the general acknowledgement of authority and the continued social and legal proscription of the groups previously excluded—women, sinners and non-Christians. Lay didactical literature was not a harbinger of the Reformation processes to come: its social imagery was not progressive, original or emancipatory. It was, however, an agent of change, and thus historical research into it can provide insight into the messianic power of fifteenth-century people, however weak it may have been.

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APPENDIX

MIDDLE LOW GERMAN INCUNABULA AND EARLY IMPRINTS

The titles are sorted according to the Middle Low German titles also used in the text. Titles in modern standard German are only used when the catalogues ISTC and GW do not provide a Middle Low German title. Incunabula containing several different texts are collected in categories: Explanations of the Credo, the Decalogue and the Pater Noster are collected in the category *Katechismen*; Ars moriendi, Testament eines sterbenden menschen etc. are collected in the category *Ars moriendi*; different kinds of prayer books are collected in the category *Gebetbuch*.

* Version/edition used for this study.
– Not Middle Low German.

Aflais und Heyldoms

* Aflais und Heyldoms der Stadt Colne (Cologne) [Low German]. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 18 Feb. 1492. BC 191, GW 8. Exemplar used: SUB Göttingen 80 H.Rhen.3038. Inc.

Aesop

Vita, after Rinucius, et Fabulae, Lib. I–IV, prose version of Romulus [Low German]. Add: Fabulae extravagantes. Fabulae novae (Tr: Rinucius). Fabulae Aviani. Fabulae collectae [Low German] (From the translation of Heinrich Steinhöwel). Leonardus Brunus Aretinus: De duobus amantibus Guiscardo et Sigismunda [Low German] (From the translation by Nikolaus von Wyle). [Magdeburg: Moritz Brandis, about 1492]. BC 215, GW 365.

* Vita, after Rinucius, et Fabulae, Lib. I–IV, prose version of Romulus [Low German]. Add: Fabulae extravagantes. Fabulae novae (Tr: Rinucius). Fabulae Aviani. Fabulae collectae [Low German] (From the translation of Heinrich Steinhöwel). Leonardus Brunus Aretinus: De duobus amantibus Guiscardo et Sigismunda [Low German] (From the translation of Nikolaus von Wyle). [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), about 1492]. BC 216, GW 366. Printed: Derendorf, Brigitte, ed. *Der Magdeburger Prosa-Äsop: Eine mittelniederdeutsche Bearbeitung von Heinrich Steinhöwels 'Esopus' und Niklas von Wyles 'Guiscard und Sigismunda'; Text und Untersuchungen.* Köln: Böhlau, 1996.

Arnt Boschmanns Mirakel

Arnt bosman byn ich genant. Cologne: Johann Landen, 1506. BC 400, VD16 A 3778.

Van arnolt boschmã || vnd hĕrich syme alde || vader deme geyst eyn || wũderlich myrakel. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuss, 1509. BC 443, VD16 A 3779.

Van Arnt Busman vnde vã ei||nẽ gheiste eyn groet mirakel. Lübeck: Stephan Arndes, 1510. BC 471, VD16 A 3780.

Uã arnt buschman || vnd hĕrich syn alde || vader der geist eyn || wunderlich Myrakel. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuß, 1514. BC 550, VD16 A 3781.

* Printed according to the Lübeck 1510 edition: Seelmann, Wilhelm. "Buschmans Mirakel: Ein religiöses Volksbuch des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts; neuer Abdruck mit einer Einleitung." *Nd. Jb. Sonderdruck* (1881): 32–67; *Nd. Jb.* 6 (1880).

Ars moriendi
see also Vorsmack
see also Testament
– Johann Geiler von Kaiserberg, Wie man sich halten soll bei einem sterbenden Menschen. [Strassburg: Martin Schott, um 1481]. [Strassburg: Heinrich Knoblochtzer, 14]82. GW 10591, 10592.
– Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg, Ein ABC, wie man sich schicken soll zu einem köstlichen seligen Tod. Daran: Hans Folz: Von der Beichte. [Speyer: Konrad Hist], 1497. GW 10580.
– Johannes Gerson, Opus tripartitum [German, transl. Gabriel Biel]. [Marienthal: Fratres Vitae Communis, about 1475]. GW 10785.
– Johannes Gerson, Opus tripartitum [German, transl. Gabriel Biel]. [Heidelberg: Heinrich Knoblochtzer, not after 1488]. GW 10786.
Johannes Gerson, Opus tripartitum [Low German]. [Cologne?: Printer of Pseudo-Augustinus, 'Manuale' (H 2024), about 1478]. BC 13, GW 10795. UB R, Fa-1119(68).50 (29 small fragments).

Bedroffenisse Marien
Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien [Low German]. Magdeburg: Johann Grashove, 1486. BC 102, GW 4506.
Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien [Low German]. Magdeburg: Johann Grashove, about 1486. GW 450610N.
* Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien [Low German]. Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 7 Apr. 1495. BC 257, GW 4507. Exemplar used: SUB Göttingen, 8°H.E.S. 86/II Inc.
* Boek van der bedroffenisse Marien [Low German]. Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 25 May 1498. BC 294, GW 4508. Exemplar used: UB Uppsala, Ink 35b:547. (contains: *Imitatio Christi* Books II–III.)

Beichtbüchlein
* Beichtbüchlein [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Albrecht Ravenstein and Joachim Westphal, about 1483–84]. GW 3778. Exemplar used: HAB, Ink. Guelf. 377.
* Beichtbüchlein [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1490]. BC 161, GW 3779. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000482D00000000>.

Bewährung, dass die Juden irren
* Seelen-Wurzgarten [Low German] Part I only, with title: Bewährung, dass die Juden irren. Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca. 1474. BC 3, GW M41179. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000099EE00000000>.

Boek der beschawynge
* Boek der beschawynge to gode edder eyn spyghel der sammitticheyt. Add: Hymnus Veni redemptor gentium [Low German]. Magdeburg: [Moritz Brandis], 4 Oct. 1492. BC 196, GW 4509. Exemplar used: StB PK, Inc. 1497.
Boek der beschawynge to gode edder eyn spyghel der sammitticheyt [Low German]. [Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, not before 1495]. GW 450910N.
De spegel der samitti||cheit. dar inne enthol||dē werden de betrachtinge aller hoch||werdigen gotliken ffeste/ Unde inni=||ger tide dorch dat gantze iar/ mit ve=||le schonen vnde suuerliken ghebeden. Rostock: Hermann Barkhusen, 1507. BC 425, VD16 ZV 14626, VD16 S 8197.

Boek van veleme rade
* Hermann Bote, Boek van veleme rade. [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1493]. BC 233, GW 496110N. Facsimile and edition in Wunderlich, Werner, and Heinz-Lothar

Worm, eds. *Hermen Botes Radbuch: In Abbildung des Druckes L ca. 1492/93; mit dem Text nach Herman Brandes und mit einer Übersetzung von Heinz-Lothar Worm*. Litterae 105. Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985.

Hermann Bote, Van veleme rade bin ick ein boek || Vnn segge vns van der werlde lop.|| Lübeck: Stephan Arndes, 1509. BC 444, VD16 B 6794 . (lost)

Bokeken van deme repe / Boek van dren strenghen

* Johannes Hus, Dat bokeken van deme repe (Provázek třípramenný) [Low German]. De uthlegghinge ouer den louen (Výklad víry) [Low German]. Transl. Johannes of Lübeck. [Lübeck: Printer of Calderinus, about 1481]. BC 51, GW no363. Printed: Jan Hus, *Dat bokeken van deme repe. Aus dem Tschechischen ins Niederdeutsche übertragen von Johann von Lübeck*. Mit einer Einleitung von Amedeo Molnár, Reprograf. Nachdruck der Ausgabe Lübeck um 1480. Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 1971 = [ca. 1480]. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 159–166. Older edition: Nicolaus Rutze. *Dat Bôkeken van deme Rêpe des Mag. Nicolaus Rutze van Rostock* (*M. Nic. Rus*)*: nach der Incunabel (F. m. 64) der Rostocker Universitätsbibliothek.* Zur öffentlichen Prüfung und Redeübung der Schüler des Gymnasiums, des Realgymnasiums und der Vorschule am 14. und 15. April 1886. Gymnasium und Realgymnasium zu Rostock; Progr. Nr. 594. Rostock, 1886.

Broder Rusche

* Bruder Rausch [Low German] Broder Rusche. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1488]. BC 138, GW 12745. Exemplar used: UFB, Mon.typ.s.l.u.a.4°136.

Bruder Rausch [Low German] Broder Rusche. [Braunschweig: Hans Dorn, about 1519]. BC 636, GW XI Sp. 271a.

Büchlein der Titel aller Stände
see Formulare

Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes [Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl / Thomas Peuntner]

* Büchlein von der Liebe Gottes [Low German] Dat boek van der warafftighen vnde rechten leue gades. Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 15 Feb. 1497. BC 279, GW 5691. Exemplar used: HAB, Th 305.

Claghe vnde droffenisse
see Van dem jungesten Tage

Cordiale quattuor novissimorum [Gerardus de Vliederhoven]

* Cordiale quattuor novissimorum [Low German] De vijer uijssersten [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1476]. BC 12, GW 7515. Exemplar used: UB K, <http://inkunabeln.ub.uni-koeln.de/vdib-info/kleioc/ico0909280> [first Middle Low German translation].

* Cordiale quattuor novissimorum [Low German] De vijer uijssersten. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 23 June 1487. BC 117, GW 7516. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00027114-1>. [second Middle Low German translation].

* De veer utersten. Hamburg: Hans Borchard, 1510. BC 473, VD16 G 1442. Exemplar used: SUB HH, Scrin A/1.

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* Eyn spegel aller lefhebberen der sundigen Werlde. Magdeburg: Simon Koch, 14 Nov. 1493. BC 228, GW 7518. [free Middle Low German adaptation]. Exemplar used: HAB, A: 149.7 Theol. (2). [Includes: Hans Müntzinger, Pater Noster].

De nye Ee

Die Neue Ehe und das Passional von Jesu [Low German]: De nye Ee und dat Passional van Jesu und Marien leven. Lübeck: [Lucas Brandis], 20 Aug. 1478. BC 20, GW 9253.

* Die Neue Ehe und das Passional von Jesu [Low German] De nye Ee und dat Passional van Jesu und Marien leven. Add: Johannes de Hildesheim: Liber de gestis et translatione trium regum [Low German]. Lübeck: [Printer of Calderinus (Johann Snel or Lucas Brandis?)], 20 Nov. 1482. BC 55, GW 9254. Exemplar used: SUB HH, AC IV, 105 (4°) (Fragment).

Der goldene Seelentrost
see also Seelentrost
* Seelentrost [Low German] De ghulden selentrost Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1489. BC 149 (Suppl.), GW M43997l0. Exemplar used: UL C, Inc. 5.A.14.2b [1021].
* Sterbebüchlein: von dem sterbenden Menschen und dem goldenen Seelentroste [Low German] Van dem steruenden Mynsschen. Unde dem gulden selen Troste. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1500]. BC 347, GW M43998. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000483500000000>.

De seven dotsunde
* – Von den sieben Todsünden. Hienach volget ein schoene materi von den Siben todsünden vnd von den Syben tugenden darwider. Augsburg: Johann Bämler, 15 Nov. [14]74. GW M47154. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00002226-8>.
– Von den sieben Todsünden. Augsburg: Johann Bämler, [14]82. GW M47155.
* Von den sieben Todsünden [Low German] Dyt sint de seuen dotsunde de stryden myt den seuen dogeden. Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), 25 Sept. 1490. BC 157, GW M47156. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Ts 50.1 (4).

Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi
Anselmus of Canterbury, Dialogus beatae Mariae et Anselmi de passione Domini [Low German]: Vraege zo Marien van der Passie uns lieven Heren. Cologne: [Johann Koelhoff, the Younger], 1492. BC 195, GW 2043.
Anselmus of Canterbury, Dialogus beatae Mariae et Anselmi de passione Domini [Low German] Vraghe van deme bitteren Lydende Jesu Christi. [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1495]. BC 260, GW 2044.
* Anselmus of Canterbury, Dialogus beatae Mariae et Anselmi de passione Domini [Low German] Vraege zo Marien van der Passie Jesu Christi. [Cologne]: Johann Koelhoff, the Younger, 21 Mar. 1499. BC 310, GW 2045. Exemplar used: ULB D, <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-i-2>.
Anselmus of Canterbury, Vrage tzo Marien. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuss, 5.5.1509. BC 442.
Anselmus of Canterbury, Vrage tzo Marien. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuss, 1514. BC 549, VD16 A 2914.
Anselmus of Canterbury, Vrage tzo Marien. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuss, 1514. BC 559, VD16 A 2915.

Doctrinale
In dussem boke: dat ein Doc=||trinale der leyen ghenomet:|| vnde in dree b[oe]ke gedeilet wert/ vyndet men vele sch[oe]ner || Lere/ vth bewerden Lerern getogen/ allen Cristgelouigen || mynschen tho der selen salicheit gantz n[ue]tte.|| Magdeburg: Jakob Winter, 1507. BC 412, VD16 D 2128. [KB: list over lost books.]

Dodes Dantz
* Totentanz [Low German] Des Dodes Dantz. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1489. BC 151, GW M47262. Exemplar used: GNN, <http://dlib.gnm.de/item/4Inc28260/html>.

* Totentanz [Low German] Des Dodes Dantz. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1496. BC 272, GW M47263. Exemplar used: HAB, A: 137 Theol. (3). Printed: Baethcke, Hermann. *Des Dodes Danz: Nach den Lübecker Drucken von 1489 und 1496.* Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart 127. Tübingen: Laupp, 1876.

Doernenkrantz

* Dornenkranz von Köln [Low German] Der Doernenkrantz van Collen. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 9 Oct. 1490. BC 156, GW M16401. Exemplar used: ULB D, <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-ii-674>.

Formulare

* Formulare und deutsch Rhetorica [Low German]. [Rostock: Fratres Domus Horti Viridis ad S. Michaelem, about 1476]. BC 11, GW 10177. Exemplar used: UB U, Fragm. b7.

* Büchlein der Titel aller Stände: wie man einem Fürsten schreiben soll [Low German] Hyr inne vynt men wo men eynen iuwelken breue scryuen schal. Magdeburg: [Simon Koch (Mentzer)], 26 Aug. 1490. GW 570120N. Exemplar used: BSB, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00034815-2>.

* Formulare und deutsch Rhetorica [Low German]. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Younger, not before 11 Aug. 1492]. BC 163, GW 10189. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000666500000000>.

Gebetbuch

see also Katechismus (GW 13002–13004)

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyde Unser Liever Vrauwen (Horae). [Magdeburg: Albrecht Ravenstein and Joachim Westphal, about 1483–84]. Also recorded as [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1478]. BC 24, GW 13012.

Ave Maria. Add: Salve Regina [Low German]. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1478]. BC 23, GW 3101.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1478]. BC 25, GW 12999.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek. Con: Konrad Gesselen: Cisioianus (Horae). [Lübeck: Johann Snel, about 1482]. BC 47, GW 13000.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). [Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, about 1490]. BC 163B, GW 13005.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyde Unser Liever Vrauwen (Horae). [Lübeck]: Stephan Arndes, 1496. BC 266, GW 13006.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyde Unser Liever Vrauwen (Horae). Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 1497. BC 278, GW 13009.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyde Unser Liever Vrauwen (Horae). [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1497]. BC 287, GW 13008.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). [Lübeck: The Poppy Printer (Hans van Ghetelen), about 1497?]. BC 288, GW 13007.

* Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyde Unser Liever Vrauwen (Horae). Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 1499. BC 311, GW 13011. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00027302-6>.

Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis?, about 1499?]. BC 163A, GW 13010.

* Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek: Seven tyden (Horae). Almanac 1500–1520. [Paris: Johann Philippi de Cruzenach, not before 1500]. BC 331A; GW 13130. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Ti 232.

[Dudesche Bedeb[oe]ke]. Lübeck: Georg Richolff d. Ä., 1501. BC 349, VD16 D 2837.

* De guldene || Lettanye.|| Dagelicke Anropynge vnde Bede tho || gode. Braunschweig: Hans Dorn 1508. BC 617, VD16 G 3904. Exemplar used: HAB, A: 1258.2 Theol.

[Bedebökeschen]. Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1509. BC 461, VD16 B 1447.
[Dudesche Bedeb[oe]ke]. Lübeck: Stephan Arndes, 1505/1510. BC 469, VD16 D 2839, VD16 D 2838.

Henselyn
* Henselyn [Low German verse]. [Lübeck: The Poppy Printer (Hans van Ghetelen), about 1498]. BC 305, GW 12267. Printed: Heß, Cordelia, ed. *Gerechtigkeit und Rechtfertigkeit: Untersuchung und Edition des "Gedichts von der Gerechtigkeit", des "Henselyns bok" und des Traktats "Kopenschopp to voren"*. Editiones / Sällskapet Runica et Mediævalia 1. Stockholm: Sällsk. Runica et Mediævalia, 2010.

Hemmelsche funtgrove
* Die himmlische Fundgrube [Low German] De hemmelsche funtgrove. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, not before 1490]. BC 166, GW M14464. Exemplar used: HAB, Ts 50,1 (2).
* – Johannes von Paltz, Dyt boeck wert genant de hemmelsche funtgrove. [Leipzig: Conrad Kachelofen, 1490]. GW M14457. Exemplar used: BSB, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00014890-3>. Printed: *Johannes von Paltz. Opera omnia vol. 3: Opuscula*. Edited by Christoph Burger. Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Texte und Untersuchungen 4. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989.
– Johannes von Paltz, Dyt boeck wert genant de hemmelsche funtgrove. [Leipzig: Conrad Kachelofen, 1491]. GW M14456.
Johannes von Paltz, Aurifodina celi.|| Die heimelsche Golt||gruyff byn ich genãt.|| Köln: Herman Bungart, 1512. BC 508, VD16 ZV 8671. Partly printed: Beck, Manfred. *Untersuchungen zur geistlichen Literatur im Kölner Druck des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts*. Göppingen: A. Kümmerle, 1977, 58–65.

Hortulus
* Hortulus animae to dude. Leipzig: Melchior Lotter, 1511. BC 496A, VD16 H 5109. Exemplar used: HAB, Ti 233.

Imitatio Christi
Imitatio Christi [Low German] Dat boeck van der navolghinge Christi (Books I–III). Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1489. BC 150, GW M46883.
Imitatio Christi [Low German] Dat boeck van der navolghinge Christi (Book IV). Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans van Ghetelen)], 1492. BC 212, GW M46885.
* Books II–III: Van deme koniglikeme Weghe des crutzes cristi. [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 1495]. BC 264, GW M51456. Exemplar used: SUB Gö, 8°H.E.S. 86/II Inc.
Imitatio Christi [Low German] Dat boeck van der navolghinge Christi (Books I–III). Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1496. BC 271, GW M46887.
* Dat bock van der na volginge ihesu cristi genomen vt dem hilligen Ewangelio. Magdeburg: Brandis, 17.VII.1501. BC 354, VD16 ZV 14943, VD16 ZV 17808. Exemplar used: HAB, 149.7 Theol. (1).
Uan der navolghin||ge Jhesu cristi.|| Rostock: Hermann Barkhusen, 1507. VD16 T 1080.
Dyt is eyn kostlich deuoit boexkẽ || vnd is genant <Qui sequitur me> || myt flyß oeuergesatz vß dem latỹ || in guden dutzschen. Cologne: Herman Bungart, 1505. BC 369, VD16 ZV 14938, VD16 ZV14941.

Katechismus: Pater Noster, Credo, Zehn Gebote
see also Hortulus
see also Licht der Seele
see also Speygel der dogede
* Tafel des Kersteliken levens [Low German] Ene guede Vermaninge en ene Tafel des kerstlyken Levens. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1475]. BC 9, GW M44777. Exemplar used: SUB Gö, MF/80 Theol. Past. 494/51 Inc.

* Die zehn Gebote [Low German]. Hijr beginnet een kostel tractaet toe dude. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1480]. GW 10572. Printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 166–174.

* Die zehn Gebote [Low German] Wo een yslik gud cristen mynsche de theyn gebade gades wol vernemen schal. [Lübeck: Printer of Fliscus (Lucas Brandis?), about 1480]. Also recorded as [about 1475–78] and [Rostock: Fratres Domus Horti Viridis ad S. Michaelem]. BC 5, GW 10573. Contains also: Audi filia / Hore dochter. Exemplars used: ALB D, Georg 71.80; and Uppsala UB Coll. 1518. Fragm. B 4.

– Hans Müntzinger, Das Pater Noster mit der Glosse. Add: Auslegung des Glaubens. Matthaeus de Cracovia: Dialog zwischen der Vernunft und dem Gewissen. Gleichnis des Menschenlebens zu einem Baumgarten. Augsburg: Anton Sorg, 3 July 1482. GW 3081 II.

* Hans Müntzinger, Dat Pater Noster mit der Glosse [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), not after 1493]. BC 168, GW M25600. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Ts 50.1 (3).

* Die zehn Gebote [Low German] In dusser materien synt de teyn gebode godes vorclaret in eyneme sermone des groten lerers Heremite. [Leipzig: Marcus Brandis, about 1484]. BC 356, GW 10574. Exemplar used: HAB, <http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/1271-21-theol-2s/start.htm>; HAB, A: 1271.21 Theol. (2).

* Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, [about 1484]. BC 79, GW 13002. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 122–126. Exemplar used: SUB HH, AV IV, 105. [contains also: Credo].

* Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, 1485. BC 84, GW 13003. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 122–126. [contains also: Credo].

* Gebetbuch [Low German] Bedeboek (Horae). Lübeck: [Matthaeus Brandis], 1487. BC 116, GW 13004. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 122–126. [contains also: Credo].

* Auslegung des Glaubens [Low German] Hyr heuet sick an eyne schone vthlegginge. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1493]. BC 237, GW 3082. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Ts 50.1 (1).

* Bescryvinghe der cristliken Ghelove [Low German]. [Paris: Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt, about 1498]. BC 304, GW 4182. Printed: *Nd. Jb.* 45 (1919), 35. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000099BC00000000>.

* Goebel, Fritz, ed. "Die Zehn Gebote mit Erklärungen und die Glaubensartikel." *Nd. Jb.* 22 (1896): 147–149.

Kerstenspiegel, Dietrich Coelde van Munster

* Critical edition: Drees, Clemens, ed. "Der Christenspiegel. Dirk van Munster." Werl: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1954. <www.dbnl.org/tekst/dirk001cdre01_01>.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel (Hantbochelgin oder Spegel des Kirstenmynschen). Cologne: Bartholomaeus de Unkel?], 7 Mar. 1486. BC 103, GW 7144.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel (Spiegel off Hantboichelgyn der Kirstenmynschen). Add: Büchlein innerlicher Übungen (Boychelgyn van inwendiger oevynge). Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 1489. BC 145, GW 7145.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel (Spiegel of dat hantboichelgyn der kyrsten mynschen). Cologne: Johann Koelhoff [the Younger?], 1493. GW 714520N.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Spiegel off Hantboichelgyn des Cristen mynschen. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Younger, 1498. BC 296, GW 7146.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel (Spegel der Cristenmynschen). [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1498/99]. BC 289, GW 7148.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel (Hantboichelgyn der Christenmynschen). Cologne: Hermann Bumgart, 1500. BC 322, GW 7147.

Kerstenspiegel [Low German] Christenspiegel. [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1499]. BC 30, GW 7149.

Eyn fruchtbair Speygel || offt Hantboichelgyn der Cristen||mynschen/ gemacht off tzosamen || vergadert van brodere Dederich. Cologne: Rudolph Spot, 1501. BC 350, VD16 C4488.

* Hyr beginnet eyn schoen spegel d || cristene mynschen. Rostock: Hermann Barkhusen, 1507. BC 428, VD16 C 4489. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Tn 203 (2).

Eyn fruchtbair spiegel || off hantboichelgyn der cristen mynschẽ. Cologne: Johann Landen, 1508. BC 432, VD16 C 4490.

Hyr begynnet eyn || sch[oe]n spegel der christene men||schen. Rostock: Ludwig Dietz, 1510. BC 472, VD16 C 4491.

Eyn fruchtbar boichel||gyn vgadert vã broder || diderich obßervantie ord.|| Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1514. BC 551, VD16 C 4492.

* Spiegel des kersten geloven [Low German]. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1477]. BC 50, GW M43083, has been identified as a text with a similar title by Ludolf of Göttingen, not identical with Dietrich's text. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 88–98.

Landfrieden

Landfrieden, Ordnung des Kammergerichts [Low German]. Worms, 7 und 17 Aug. 1495. Cologne: [Johann Landen], 16 Jan. 1496. Also recorded as [Johann Koelhoff, the Younger]. BC 267A, GW M22193.

Lehre von der Kindertaufe

* Andreas Proles, Lehre von der Kindertaufe. Eyne ynnyge lere van der dope der kyndere. Magdeburg: Simon Koch, 30 June 1500. BC 329, GW M35643. Exemplars used: HAB, M:Ts 50.1(5); StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00004E0400000000>.

– Andreas Proles, Lehre van der Kindertaufe. [Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, about 1500]. GW M35642. Exemplar used: UB, <http://inkunabeln.ub.uni-koeln.de/vdib-info/kleioc/ipo1008000>.

Lehre

see also Luxusordnung

* Eyne gotlike gude lere allen minschen [Low German] [Lübeck]: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, [about 1491]. GW M17699. Printed: Collijn, Isak. *Drei neu aufgefundene niederdeutsche Einblattkalender des 15. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Lübecker Buchdrucks.* Skrifter utgifna af K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala 9,1. Uppsala, Leipzig: Lundström; Harrassowitz, 1904, 12–18.

* Eene lere, wo sick twe Minschen in dem Sakrament der Ee holden scholen. [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1478]. BC 35, GW M17729. Exemplar used: GB D, Georg Hs. 71. 8° (17b), fol. 306r–311v.

– Lehre und Predigt, wie sich zwei Menschen in dem Sakrament der heiligen Ehe halten sollen. Augsburg: Christmann Heyny, 1481. GW M17728. Printed: Brinkhus, Gerd. *Eine bayerische Fürstenspiegelkompilation des 15. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen und Textausgabe.* Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 66. München: Artemis-Verlag, 1978.

* Bernardus Claravallensis, Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris [Low German] Item eyne schone lefflicke lere vn[de] vnderwisinge wo eyn iewelick ma[n] syn huß regiren schal. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1487]. BC 124 and 125, GW 3985 and 3986. Printed in Clive D. M. Cossar, *The German translations of the Pseudo-Bernhardine "Epistola de cura rei familiaris"*. (Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 166.) Göppingen 1975, 317–327. Exemplar used: HAB, M: Li 366.

* Eyne gude lere deme de wyl denen deme Altare der hillighen Myssen. [Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, about 1485]. BC 96, GW M17695 and M1769520. The same text is also an appendix to De ghulden Seelentrost, GW M4399710, and inserted in Speygel der leyen, GW M43087.

Licht der Seelen

* Licht der Seelen. Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, 1484. BC 72, GW M18207. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 126–137. Exemplars used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00006AE200000000>; UB U, Ink. 33:200(:2) 8:0.

* Licht der Seele / Dit is de iegher. Hamburg: Drucker des Jegher, 1502. BC 365, VD16 L 1586. Exemplar used: SUB HH, Scrin 175c.

Losbuch

* Losbuch [Low German]. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1489]. BC 152, GW M18775. Exemplar used: UB R, Cf-2224(7).34 (fragment).

Lucidarius

* Lucidarius [Low German]. Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, 1485. BC 85, GW M09355. Exemplar used: KB, Inc. Haun. 2537.

Luxusordnung

* Van viij stade der minschen in der Ee. Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, ca. 1478]. BC 41, GW M43235. Exemplar used: Geistliches Ministerium Greifswald Inc. 1502 (fragment). Printed: *UB Lübeck* 1, 11, nr. 311, 316–331, ibid. 321.

Macchabäer

Dat lyden der hilger Machabeen. Cologne: Landen, Johann, 1507. BC 418, VD16 L 7734. Printed: Schade, Oskar, ed. *Geistliche Gedichte des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts vom Niderrhein.* Hannover: Rümpler, 1854.

Menschenspiegel

* Menschenspiegel. [Cologne: Johann Guldenschaff, about 1485]. BC 99, GW M43098. Exemplar used: ULB D, <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-ii-679>.

Mygrale

Guilelmus Textor / Wilhelm Zewers, Eyn seer vruchtbars boexken genant Mygrale. Cologne: Hermann Bungart 1503. BC 378, VD16 Z 399. (lost?)

– Guilelmus Textor / Wilhelm Zewers, Preparamentum saluberrimu[m] christiani homi[ni]s ad mortem, se disponentis, [et]c. Colonie [um 1502]. VD16 Z 398. BSB, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00003158–4>.

Pacientia

* Patientia, Ein schoin büchelgyn van der edeler dughden der Verduldicheit. Cologne 1510. BC 489, VD16 P 908. Exemplar used: WLB, R 16 Pas 2.

Passio Christi

* Passio Christi [Low German] Van der martere vnses heren ihesu christi an den hilligen guden vridage in der marter weken. [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1478]. BC 38, GW M29641. Exemplar used: HAB, 11.1 Georgr. 2^{o} (1).

Pater Noster
see Katechismus

Pfefferkorn

* Johannes Pfefferkorn, Der Joeden Spiegel. Cologne: Johann von Landen, 3.9.1507. BC 421, VD16 P 2299. Exemplar used: HAB, Hi 80.

Johannes Pfefferkorn, Der Jodenspiegel. Braunschweig: Hans Dorn, 1507. BC 422.

* Johannes Pfefferkorn, Jch heyß eyn buchlijn der iuden beicht. Cologne: Johann Landen, 1508. VD16 P 2307. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00004097-5>.

Johannes Pfefferkorn, Der Joeden Bicht. Cologne: Johann von Landen, 1508. BC 437, VD16 P 2309.

* Johannes Pfefferkorn, Der Juden Ostern. IN disem buchlein vindet || yr ein entlichẽ furtrag. wie || die blinden Juden yr Ostern halten. Cologne: Johann Landen, 1509. VD16 P 2291. Exemplar used: BSB, <urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00006002–6>.

Practica

* Practica auf das Jahr 1479 [Low German]. [Rostock: Fratres Domus Horti Viridis ad S. Michaelem, about 1478–79]. BC 44, GW M35161.

Practica auf das Jahr 1492 [Low German]. [Hamburg: Johann Borchard, about 1492]. BC 206, GW M5073010.

Practica auf das Jahr 1493 [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), about 1492–93]. BC 226, GW M35174.

Practica auf das Jahr 1503. [Hamburg: Printer of Iegher, 1503]. BC 377.

Practica auf das Jahr 1504. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, 1504]. BC 382.

Prognosticon, Johannes Virdung

Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon (1489?) [Low German]. [Stendal: Joachim Westphal, about 1488–89]. BC 153, GW M50715.

* Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon 1492 [Low German] [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1491–92]. BC 213, GW M50727. Exemplar used: HAB, M:128.40 Helmst.

Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon 1492 [Low German]. [Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, about 1491–92]. BC 198, GW M50728.

Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon 1494 [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Moritz Brandis, about 1493–94]. BC 247, GW M50736.

Johannes Virdung, Prognosticon 1498 [Low German]. [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1497–98]. GW M5074810.

Rock Jesu Christi

* Rock Jesu Christi. [Rostock: Ludwig Dietz, ca. 1512]. BC 517. Exemplar used: UB R, Fa-1119(68).47. No VD16 number. Two other editions, Rostock 1512 and Cologne 1512 (BC 515 and 516), are also missing in VD16.

Rosenkranz

* Nitzschewitz, Hermannus, Der goldene Rosenkranz [Low German] De gulden rosenkrans der soten gotliken leue. [Lüneburg: Johann Luce, about 1494]. BC 235, GW M27155. Exemplar used: KB, Inc. Haun. 2923.

Rosarium Beatae Virginis Mariae [Low German] Rosenkranz und Psalter Mariae: De salter Marien der reynen yuncfrouwen und der hilgen drevoldicheyt. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), not before 1492]. BC 317, GW M38914.

Dry Rosenkrentzs dye men an||heifft up vnß lieuer vrauw dach. Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1510. BC 490, VD16 D 2807.

Hie begint eyn boxkyn genãt der gul||den rosen psalter marie. Cologne: Landen, Johann, 1515. BC 574, VD16 ZV 12865, VD16 G 3905.

Salomon und Markolf

* Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolphi [Low German]. Stendal: Joachim Westphal, 1489. BC 148, GW 12788. StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000099D900000000>.

Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolphi [Low German]. [Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, about 1490]. BC 171, GW 12789.

Schachbuch

* De ludo scachorum [Low German] Dat schakspel to dude. Tr: Stephan Meister. [Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, about 1490]. BC 316, GW 6531. Exemplar used: KB, Inc. 3785. Printed:

Meister Stephans Schachbuch. Ein mittelniederdeutsches Gedicht des 14. Jahrhunderts. Edited by Wolfgang Schlüter. Norden 1889.

Schatzkasten

Schatzkasten der hilger Kirchen. Cologne: Johann von Landen 1507. BC 424, VD16 S 2356.

Seelentrost

Seelentrost [Low German]. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 1474. BC 2, GW M41137.

* Seelentrost [Low German]. Cologne: Ludwig von Renchen, 1484. BC 77, GW M41138. Exemplar used: UB K, <http://inkunabeln.ub.uni-koeln.de/vdib-info/kleioc/is00359200>.

Seelentrost [Low German]. Cologne: Johann Koelhoff, the Elder, 23 June 1489. BC 149, GW M41139.

Der Seele Rychtestych

* Der Seele rychtestych. Rostock: Ludwig Dietz, 1515. BC 566, VD16 S 5414. Exemplar used: UB R, Fm-4253.

Spegel der sammiticheit

* Spegel der Sammitticheyt (der Consciencien) [Low German]. Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes 1487. BC 120, GW M43100. Exemplar used: SUB HH, AC IV, 110.

Spiegel

see also: Cordiale

* Spiegel der Tugenden [Low German] Speygel der dogede. Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, 23 Aug. 1485. BC 87, GW M43114. Exemplars used: UB Uppsala, Ink 33:243; BSB, <8:ourn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00034777-9>. Partly printed: Geffcken, *Bildercatechismus*, 139–148.

* Spiegel der Laien [Low German] Speygel der Leyen. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1496. BC 269, GW M43087. Printed: Katara, Pekka, ed. *Speygel der Leyen.* Helsinki: Finn. Literaturges., 1952.

St. Annenbüchlein

* [St. Annenbüchlein] HYr in dussem böcklin. Findeth men Schöne vnd nutsame lere gebede vn[de] genöchlike materie Int erste de krone cristi gantß nutsam Thom andern Sunte Annen legend vn[de] all öres geschlechtes. Braunschweig: Hans Dorn, 1507. BC 417, VD16 S 3410. Exemplar used: HAB, A: 1223.35 Theol. Printed: Roolfs, Friedel, ed. *Das Braunschweiger St.-Annen-Büchlein: ein mittelniederdeutscher Druck aus dem Jahre 1507*. Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1997.

Sternberg

– Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament. [Bamberg: Heinrich Petzensteiner and Johann Pfeyl, after 1492]. GW M44004.

– Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament. [Basel: Jacobus Wolff, de Pforzheim, not before the end of 1492]. Also recorded as [Basel: Johann Amerbach, about 1489–91] and [Speyer: Conrad Hist, about 1494?]. GW M44005.

Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg. [Low German]. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, not before 24.X.1492]. BC 211, GW M44011. (broadsheet).

Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament. [Cologne: Ludwig von Renchen?, about 1492–93]. BC 208, GW M44006.

Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament [Low German] (S)terneberch. Ua den bosen ioden volget hyr eyn gheschicht [Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, about 1492–93]. BC 209, GW M44008.

* Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament [Low German] Van der mysehandelinge des hilligen Sacramentes. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), about 1492–93].

BC 210, GW M44009. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000483600000000>.

– * Geschichte der Juden zu Sternberg mit dem Sakrament. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch (Mentzer), about 1492–93]. GW M44007. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00004E0500000000>.

Summa

Johannes Friburgensis, Summa confessorum [German (Low Saxon)] (Transl.: Berchtold, O.P.). Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, 1487. BC 119, GW M13615.

* Johannes Friburgensis, Summa confessorum [Low German] (Transl.: Berchtold, O.P.). Magdeburg: Moritz Brandis, 21 Sept. 1491. BC 188, GW M13609. Exemplar used: ULB S, <urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:3–32496>.

* Johannes Friburgensis, Summa confessorum [Low German] (Transl.: Berchtold, O.P.). Magdeburg: Moritz Brandis, 11 Oct. 1498. BC 297, GW M13612. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00050428-3>.

Testament

see also Ars moriendi

see also Sterbebüchlein

Dat testament eynes waren Cristen mynschen [Low German]. [Lübeck: Matthaeus Brandis, about 1488–89]. BC 111, GW M43995.

* Dat testament eynes waren Cristen mynschen [Low German]. Lübeck: [The Poppy Printer (Hans von Ghetelen)], 1491. BC 190, GW M43996.

Unser liever vrouwe clage / Bomgharde

see also Rosenkranz

* Unser leuen vrouwen bomgharde [Low German]. [Lübeck: Stephanus Arndes, about 1498]. BC 261, GW 4640. Exemplar used: SUB Gö, 8°H.E.S. 86/II Inc.

Unserer Lieben Frauen Klage [Low German] Dit is vnser lieuer vrouwe clage. Cologne: Apud Lyskirchen [Ulrich Zel, about 1500]. BC 341.

* Unserer lieben Frauen Klage. [Cologne]: Johann Koelhoff, the Younger, [about 1500]. BC 342, GW M16320. Exemplar used: ULB D, <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-ii-291-iv>.

DJt is vnser lieuer Vrouw cla||ge. Cologne: Heinrich von Neuß, 1509. BC 463, VD16 D 2080.

Dat boek d' mede=||lydinghe Marien. Lübeck: Stephan Arndes, 1515. BC 561, VD16 ZV 2188.

Unserer Lieben Frauen Klage [Low German] Dit is vnser lieuer vrouwe clage. Cologne: Apud Lyskirchen [Ulrich Zel, about 1500].

Van XII fruchten misse zu hoeren

* Van xii fruchten misse zo || hoeren mlt jnnicheit. Cologne: Hermann Bungart, 1510. BC 481, VD16 V 370. Additional numbers assigned: VD16 V356, VD16 V371. Exemplar used: WLB, R 16 Pas 2.

Van dem jungesten Tage / Claghe der verdomeden selen

* Klage von dem Jüngsten Tage [Low German] Claghe unde droffenisse der verdomeden selen. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1489/91]. GW M44788. Exemplar used: StB PK, <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000482F00000000>.

* Klage von dem Jüngsten Tage [Low German] Dit is de claghe vnde droffenisse der vordomeden selen. [Magdeburg: Simon Koch, about 1493]. BC 234, GW M44789. Exemplar used: HAB, 149.7 Theol. (3).

Vogel sprake

* Der Vogel sprake. [Cologne: Retro Minores (Martin von Werden?), about 1500]. BC 348, GW M51323. Exemplar used: BSB, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00032627-8>.

Vorsmack

* Vorsmack und Vrokost des hemmelischen Paradises. Van deme Lidende Christi unde wo de Mynsche wol sterven moghe. [Beichtbüchlein, Gebetbuch]. Add. Ars moriendi [Low German]. [Lübeck: Printer of Calderinus (Johann Snel or Lucas Brandis?), 1481]. BC 53A, GW M29642. Exemplar used: SUB Gö, 8 MED PRACT 80/57 INC.

Wilsnack

* Erfindunge und Wunderwerke des hilligen Sacraments tho der Wilsnack. Magdeburg: Jakob Winter 1509. BC 457, VD16 D 2076. Exemplar used: ULB S, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:1-194534-p0001-6>.

Witte Lilien

* *De witte lilien der kuscheyt*:. . . Vppe dat yuwe werdicheit eine kleyne hulpe darynne hebben moge/ de kyndere tuchtlike[n] vn[de] geistlike[n] lerende. Brunswygk: D[orn], [ca. 1507]. BC 429. Exemplar used: HAB, <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/1271-21-theol-1s/start.htm>.

Ynkere to gode

* Speigel der waren vnde rechten ynkere to gode. Braunschweig: Hans Dorn 1508. BC 438, VD16 S 8198, VD16 ZV 14627. Exemplar used: HAB, A: 1222.32 Theol. (2).

Zehn Gebote
see Katechismus

Zwiegespräch

* Zwiegespräch zwischen dem Leben und dem Tod. Lübeck: Bartholomaeus Ghotan, um 1484. BC 82, GW M17411 (fragment, lost). Printed: Mantels, Wilhelm, ed. "Noch einmal das Zwiegespräch zwischen dem Leben und dem Tode." *Nd. Jb.* 2 (1876): 131–133. <http://www.archive.org/stream/jahrbuchdesvere11unkngoog#page/n276/mode/2up>.

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